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ABSTRACT

Intended for practitioners in the field of behavior disorders, this monograph presents a measurement rather than method focus to reading and writing instruction that is heavily based on the premise of developing skills, practicing such skills, and measuring growth in such skills. Two measurement concepts--proficiency and learning measurement--are interwoven in the first section on reading, which looks in depth at word pronunciation and reading comprehension and provides a standard behavior chart. The second section on writing stresses prior proficiency in reading words and structures before beginning work on writing skills. Reading proficiently is defined as reading 150-250 words correctly per minute with 5 or fewer errors. Writing activities are focused on real-world activities such as filling out application forms, making lists, or writing personal letters. These activities are presented in the separate sections on handwriting, spelling, capitalization, sentence and paragraph structure, and grammatical and vocabulary usage. Included in each section are samples of practice/evaluation sheets. Examples are also provided of directions for use in a learning center, spelling correction sheets, and file cabinet organization. (HOD)

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Iowa Monograph:

On Reading and Writing

by
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Educational Consultant
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

June, 1982

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The work of the secretaries, students, teachers, supervisors, and administrators of the Bemidji and Crookston Regional Special Education Cooperatives of Northwestern Minnesota, from 1970-1979, is very much in evidence in this monograph. The contributions made by the secondary English teachers, Brent Amundson, Gloria Anderson, LaPalma Anderson, Barbara Bohn, Patricia Grace, Merrily Henne, Patricia Hughes, Annellee Woodstrom, and Patricia Zea are particularly evident in the writing section.

My personal and professional relationship with the following people has contributed to my own development and the concepts presented here -Barbara Bateman, Elizabeth Haughton, Eric Haughton, Carl Koenig, Harold Kunzelmann, Ogden Lindsley, and particularly Ann Starlin.

--Clay Starlin

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Preface

The goal of the Iowa Monograph Series is to provide information which is both timely and relevant for practitioners in the field of behavior disorders in Iowa. While much of the work of such professionals deals with the management of deviant behavioral patterns, it is also obvious that the teaching of academic skills still remains a vital part of educational programs for behaviorally disordered youth. It is with this in mind that this monograph was planned.

Dr. Clay Starlin presents in this monograph a measurement rather than method focus to reading and writing instruction that is heavily based on the premise of developing skills, practicing such skills, and measuring growth in skill areas.

I would like to thank Dr. Starlin for the time and effort devoted and the competence he demonstrated in developing this material for us. Barbara Wilcots, Ray Benter, and Joyce Short also deserve much credit for making this publication possible.

Carl R. Smith, Consultant
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ON READING

Introduction

This article represents our most recent knowledge in how to apply the principles of learning to the teaching and evaluation of reading. The information is presented in a simplified manner. However, this simplicity should not be confused with a lack of sophistication. One of the hallmarks of science is that the problems under investigation become clearer, and appear more simplistic, as we move closer to solving them.

The field research that has taken place over the last ten years in the area of reading has identified the essential (versus spurious) components involved in efficiently and effectively teaching and evaluating reading. Although we are particularly concerned with handicapped children, the information presented is applicable to students in all categories (e.g., "retarded," "average," "gifted") and to all ages (i.e., preschool through adult).

I am sure that a number of the concepts presented will conflict with your present beliefs and practices. I strongly urge you to **neither accept nor reject** the information out of hand. Instead, try out the ideas with an open mind, follow your own common sense, then draw your own conclusions.

This article emphasizes a measurement focus toward teaching rather than a method focus. We are not presenting a "new reading method" to be compared with other reading methods. What is presented is a statement of: 1) what is essential to teach another person to read, regardless of the material used and 2) how to precisely evaluate student performance and learning and thus determine effective teaching procedures.

There are two central measurement concepts, **proficiency** and **learning measurement**, which are interwoven into each segment of this article. Consequently, it should prove helpful to briefly discuss each of these concepts at the outset.

Proficiency

The entire decision making process, as it relates to teaching and evaluation, hinges on how proficiency is defined. The lack of agreement in this area has been the biggest single factor in maintaining much of the confusion in the reading area.

What does it mean to be a good 4th grade reader? What is the difference between a good and poor comprehender? What constitutes adequate word pronunciation skills?

Proficiency means to be skilled, to perform with ease and accuracy. There is no such thing as having different levels of proficiency. Certainly there are different levels of performance, but either a student has achieved a **standard** of proficiency, or he/she is not proficient.

Because it is a standard, it remains the same regardless of the age of the student or his/her label. These standards are directly analogous to many of the standard (or normal) limits we find in medicine (e.g., 98.6).

There are *only two* dimensions to academic proficiency. One is **accuracy**, the relationship of the number or correct responses to the number of incorrect responses. The other dimension is **fluency**, the number of total responses made in a standard time period.

We look at both fluency and accuracy because we are concerned with the *inaccurate student* and the *slow performing* student.

These two factors combine into four possible performance patterns:

1. fluent accurate students (proficient)
2. fluent inaccurate students
3. slow accurate students
4. slow inaccurate students

You can probably write down names of students you have taught next to each of these patterns. Obviously, number 1 is most desirable and number 4 is least desirable. Accuracy and fluency are equally important and without both, a student is not proficient.

Initially, the concern for fluency, and therefore time, seems somewhat foreign since we were taught that: accuracy alone = proficiency (e.g.,90% accuracy=pass to a new level). Just as we keep track of accuracy information for students who have accuracy problems, we need to keep track of fluency information for students who have fluency problems, such as: slow reading, failure to complete assignments and needing additional time on tests.

To measure *accuracy*, we **count** the number of correct and error responses. To measure *fluency*, we look at total production in a standard **time** (e.g., 1 minute, 2 minutes, 5 minutes). The measurement of the fluency area involves the student's fluidness of performance; it is not a race or a speed test. We are not timing the student; we are looking at the student's performance during a standard time period.

The fluency factor has recently increased in significance because it appears to be directly involved with the retention of information. That is, when things are done fluently and accurately versus just accurately, we still know the information in a week, in a month, after summer break.

Maintaining **standard** accuracy and fluency criteria means that the slower learning students will achieve proficiency on fewer skills and concepts. A slow learning student may spend 13 years in school and achieve proficiency in skills equivalent to a fifth grade level. This is 13 years of effort for five "traditionally defined" years of growth. However, this student is **proficient** at the fifth grade level and is, therefore, as competent at a fifth

grade level as any student in the school. He or she is competitive for any job that requires fifth grade level skills. This is a very different process than socially promoting students through school, exposing them to many areas, but having them achieve proficiency in very few of them.

When specific proficiency standards are stated, in the remainder of the article, these will be in terms of a correct and error standard (accuracy) over time (fluency).

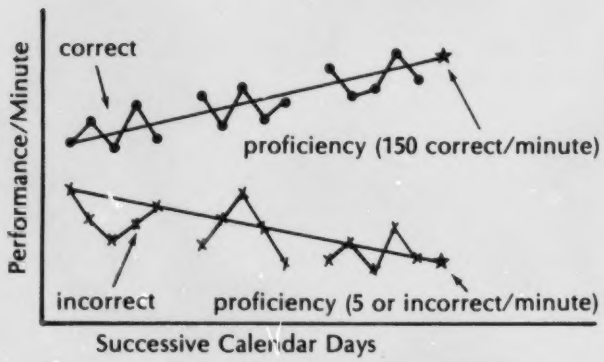
Learning Measurement

Past and present evaluation procedures have been measures of student performance at a certain point in time (e.g., achievement tests, diagnostic tests, unit tests, criterion-referenced tests). To obtain a measure of learning, it is necessary to take repeated measures of performance over a period of weeks.

It is not feasible to give an achievement test or a unit test each day for two weeks in order to watch a **change in student performance** (i.e., learning). However, it is feasible to sample performance for one, two, or three minutes each day.

The measurement of learning as used here will always involve taking these short performance samples each day as a student moves from a point of nonproficiency to a point of proficiency.

Graphically, such change in performance (learning) might look like the following:



Each dot and "x" combination represents the correct and error performance for one day's performance sample. In this example it took three weeks (15 school days) for the student to move from a point of nonproficiency to proficiency.

A standard chart used to represent learning is shown in Figure 1 (page 3). (For more information regarding the chart, see *Teaching Exception Children*, Spring 1971.) Maintaining such learning information makes it possible to change an instructional program when learning is not rapid enough.

A measure of learning complements the proficiency concept in the decision making process. Knowing precisely where we are going (proficiency) and having a means to monitor progress toward that goal (a measure of learning) allows us to become more highly skilled teachers.

The remainder of the article looks in depth at the word pronunciation area and briefly at the comprehension area.

Word Pronunciation

What Is Our Outcome Goal?

The outcome goal of word pronunciation instruction is to teach students to accurately and fluently pronounce (orally and then silently)[1] 10,000-60,000 printed words.

Our *word pronunciation* outcome goal is not to teach students:

1. to sound out words
2. to learn letter names
3. to learn sound-symbol relationships
4. to blend sounds together
5. to identify syllables in words
6. to underline silent letters, or vowels in words ad infinitum

All of these items are instructional activities (not outcome goals) which may or may not be helpful in teaching students to pronounce words. In fact, most of these items are making learning to read more difficult rather than less so.

What is crucial to remember while reading this article, as well as in your own teaching of reading, is that our teaching and evaluation focus is on the pronunciation of total words. It is necessary to judge the effectiveness of all our teaching by the effect it has on learning to pronounce words (not attack words, recognize words, identify words).

What Are the Prerequisites to Learning to Read?

The intellectual capability in learning to "hear" words is parallel to that involved in learning to "see" words. Consequently, if a child has learned to speak he/she is capable of learning to read and without traditional "reading readiness" instruction.[2]

Following is a checklist of the prerequisite criteria that a student should meet prior to beginning reading instruction. If we can place a check mark next to each of these items, a student is ready to read.

- ☐ 1. is proficient in oral language
- ☐ 2. has adequate hearing and vision (with corrections or aids if necessary)
- ☐ 3. is motivated (usually not a problem, most students are anxious to learn to read by school-age)
- ☐ 4. the initial words to be introduced in reading are part of the student's speaking vocabulary (most students entering kindergarten, even many who would be considered moderately handicapped, will have a speaking vocabulary of around 6,000 words)
- ☐ 5. can demonstrate understanding that printed letters in different combinations represent spoken words
- ☐ 6. knows letter names

---

[1]To be sure that a student is proficiently pronouncing words accurately and fluently, initially emphasize oral reading. Once proficiency is established with a set of words, emphasize silent reading from that point on.

[2]Certainly preschool children who have limited speech and/or language skills, upon entering school, will require a speech and/or language program before reading instruction begins.

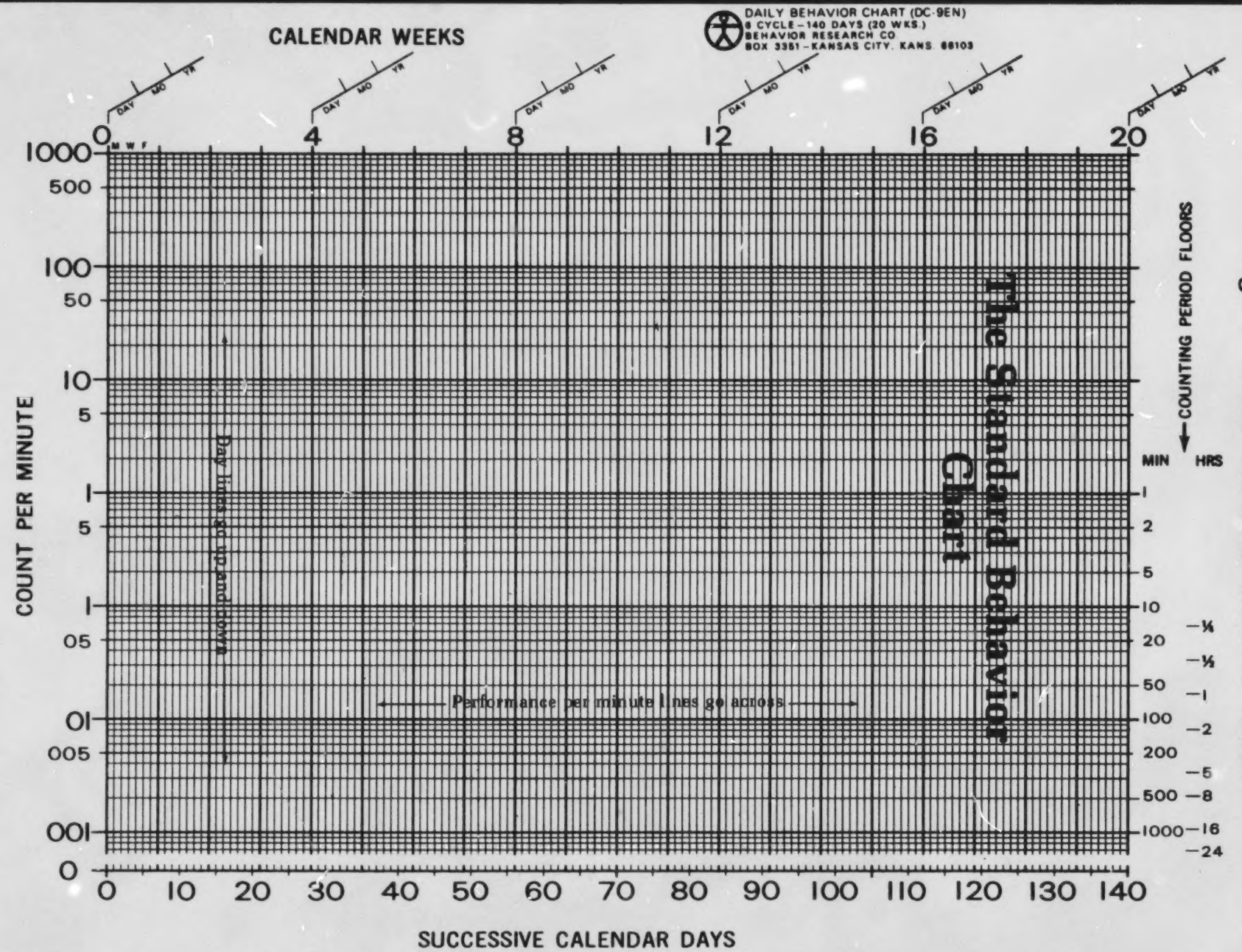


Figure 1 The Standard Behavior Chart

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Literally, letter names should not be considered a prerequisite to learning to pronounce words as units. If the student understands criteria number five, it is not necessary that he/she knows the names of the letters. However, by providing names for the 52 funny squiggles that make up the different words: the student and teacher can talk about the letters, the student can recognize that these different letters occur over and over in different words, and the student should be less confused--as when students know everyone's name in *the classroom compared to the first day of class when* they do not know anyone's name.

It is doubtful whether the "readiness" activities that follow, which are commonly part of many reading readiness programs, have a direct relationship to learning to read better. As a matter of fact, some of these activities may make the beginning reading process more confusing.

1. sound-symbol relationships and blending
2. visual discrimination activities
3. auditory discrimination activities
4. visual-motor activities
5. visual memory activities
6. auditory memory activities

Following are a few reading readiness instructional ideas that can be particularly helpful.

1. Read to the child often (at both home and school) and make sure the child can see the print. While reading, point to the words in the book moving your finger in a smooth left to right direction.
2. Have students practice saying words from word/picture cards or word sheets.
3. Use situational writing (e.g., when saying "good morning," write it on the board).
4. Point to signs, labels in the environment and read them out loud.
5. Use book-tapes where the child can follow along in a book as a story is told on the tape.
6. Have printed material (books, magazines, newspapers) accessible in all parts of home and school.

What Constitutes Word Pronunciation Proficiency?

Our goal is to have students learn to pronounce words. However, with any given material (e.g., basal readers, textbooks, word sheets, newspapers, library books), at what point is a student proficient and ready to move on to new material?

In Table 1 below are the proficiency standards we use in the word pronunciation area.

Table 1

Pinpoint	Proficiency Standard
reads isolated words from a sheet	80-250 correct/min. 2 or fewer errors/min.
reads words in isolated phrases or sentences from a sheet	150-250 correct/min. 5 or fewer errors/min.
reads words orally in-context	150-250 correct/min. 5 or fewer errors/min.
reads words silently in-context	350-900 correct/min. 5 or fewer errors/min.

The best way to get some comfort and confidence with these standards is to pick up a textbook, a newspaper, etc., and read each of them (orally and silently) for one minute at a comfortable pace. Count up the number of correct and error words you read during each minute. If you are proficient, by definition you will fall within these proficiency ranges.

The proficiency standards are in terms of a range because reading rate will vary depending on: the complexity of the vocabulary, the familiarity with the content, the purpose of the reading, etc. The low end of the correct range represents a minimum standard, *regardless of the material, and the high end indicates* where accuracy will begin to break down because performance is too rapid.

Concern is sometimes expressed because the same standards are used for "normal" adults through pre-schoolers. If the basic teaching tactics (discussed later in this section) are employed, all students can achieve the same standards. Looking at the normal speaking fluencies of adults versus pre-schoolers demonstrates why this is feasible. Adults and pre-schoolers talk within approximately the same fluency range (i.e., 150 -250 words per minute), which is the same range identified for oral reading proficiency. Consequently, pre-schoolers have the **potential** to read as fluently as they talk.

These proficiency standards for the first time have given us a quantitative point that defines when a student has established words in his/her long-term memory. This means that when we leave one set of words to work on a new set, we can be confident the student will remember the previous words.

A few final points before leaving the proficiency area. (1) The reason for having a student read orally is to substantiate that she/he can in fact pronounce the words proficiently (accurately and fluently). Once this has been substantiated, the focus should shift to silent reading. (2) The fluency ranges are lower for the isolated word sheets because it is not possible to move as smoothly through this material as through in-context material. (3) For those persons more accustomed to an "accuracy alone" mastery criteria, note that all of the proficiency standards are above a 96% accuracy standard.

What Procedures and Materials Shall We Use to Evaluate Reading Performance?

The focus of evaluation is on the student's ability to pronounce words, not on evaluating those institutional activities (e.g., marking syllables, blending) mentioned earlier in the section.

The materials to use for evaluation are the same materials used for teaching reading in the classroom. No other outside test or materials are necessary. Following are the steps to follow in conducting an oral reading evaluation sample regardless of the material (e.g., word sheet, newspaper, textbook, library book).

1. Identify persons to help record (e.g., proficient peers, older students, aides, parent helpers).
2. Use duplicate materials. One for the student to read from and one covered with a sheet of mylar or plastic film for the recorder to follow along on and mark incorrect responses.
3. Tell the student to skip any words he or she does not know.

4. Sample performance for one minute.
5. Ask the student to "please begin;" start the one-minute timing. (Use an accurate timer, preferably with an auditory signal.)
6. Place a slash mark in your copy of the material where you started the timing.
7. As the student reads, place a check mark over any errors (i.e., mispronunciations and words skipped).
8. When the one-minute sample ends, say "please stop," place a slash mark on your copy to indicate where the timing ended and say "thank you." (If a sample finishes in the middle of a page or story, place a slash at this point and allow the student to finish the page or story.)
9. Count the total words covered during the one-minute timing (i.e., words between the two slashes). Count up words in materials that are read frequently, and place the counts down the right-hand margin to save re-counting every time a sheet or page is read.[3]
10. Count up the total number of check-marked errors (i.e., mispronunciations and words skipped) made during the one-minute timing.
11. If you desire a record of the errors, copy these on a separate sheet.
12. Subtract the number of errors from the total words covered to get the number correct (total words - errors = correct words).
13. Chart the correct and error scores on the standard chart (Figure 1). Use a (.) for correct and an (x) for errors on the appropriate day line. (To evaluate how a student is learning (i.e., moving from nonproficiency to proficiency) we merely take repeated samples each day and represent each on the standard chart.)

Silent Reading. Any need to evaluate silent reading performance will usually relate to monitoring silent reading fluency versus accuracy. We should have already substantiated reading accuracy through oral samples.

The material used in silent reading evaluation should also be classroom material. The procedures for recording silent reading performance are the same as for oral reading, except there is not a need for duplicate material or a separate recorder.

An auditory signal timer will enable the student to read for a minute and place a start and stop slash in the material where the timer indicated the minute started and ended. The student can also mark with a pencil any unknown words. This may be particularly useful in material introducing new concepts. The student should then compute the correct and error frequencies and chart them.

[3]Whenever possible the student should carry out steps 9 through 13.

It is not necessary to maintain a detailed error analysis record as is done in most reading diagnostic tests for the following reasons:

1. If too many errors exist (i.e., the student is not learning) it is better to slice back to material with fewer errors rather than stay at a level and develop an elaborate error remediation program (i.e., build a new foundation versus patch up an old one).
2. Reading fluency (the total words per minute) provides an index of those error categories which interfere with fluency (i.e., self-corrections, repetitions and external or internal sounding out). The more of these errors, the slower the reader; the fewer of these, the more fluent the reader.
3. Often the diagnostic process identifies and then implies needed remediation for medial vowel problems, endings, beginning syllables, etc. This process focuses on the components of word pronunciation rather than on the outcome goal of the entire word. By maintaining a focus on the whole word and using the basic teaching tactics (discussed later in the section), students learn error words faster.

In summary, the materials that are available in your classroom should be used to evaluate word pronunciation skills. It is not necessary for purposes of classroom decision making to use any type of test (i.e., achievement, diagnostic, home made, factory made). By following the recording steps outlined and using your classroom materials, you will have information that will translate directly into instructional placement.

How Do We Determine Instructional Placement?

An instructional placement decision involves determining from what material(s) a student will learn best. Remember, we may wish to have a student use more than one reading material (e.g., library book, basal reader, textbook, newspaper) at the same time.

Since the primary concern is word pronunciation skills, the focus of the instructional placement section is in the oral reading area. A student should be encouraged to read silently in those materials in which she or he has achieved word pronunciation proficiency.

The first step in the instructional placement process is to identify those materials that could be used in your classroom setting. From these materials develop an informal reading inventory (IRI). This IRI might take a form such as:

1. a passage from the beginning, middle, and end of each basal reader
2. passages from selected library books
3. passages from selected sections of different optional textbooks
4. passages from different newspapers or magazines, or certain sections of the newspapers or magazines

To faciliate ease and accuracy of recording, these passages should meet the following criteria:

1. be at least 300 words in length
2. be a running narrative versus poetry, dialogue, etc.
3. have a cumulative word count for each line, down the right hand margin

After the IRI passages have been selected, have the student read for one minute each selected passage until an instructional level is found. (The recording procedures described under "What Procedures and Materials Shall We Use?" should be followed during the instructional placement process.)

The guides for instructional placement are presented in Table 2. There are three different levels represented: 1) at the **proficiency level** the student knows the materials and should move on to new skills or concepts, 2) at the **instructional level** the student is not proficient and additional learning is required but the skills or concepts are not too difficult, 3) at the **frustration level** the skills or concepts are too difficult for rapid learning to occur.

Table 2

Level	Performance Criteria	Action
Proficient:	150-250 words read correctly per minute and 5 or fewer incorrect per minute	Move (to new level)
Instructional:	70-149 words read correctly per minute and/or 6-10 incorrect per minute	Stay (at this level as an instructional level)
Frustration:	0-69 words read correctly per minute and/or 11 or more incorrect per minute	Slice (to a lower level)

In making a decision about where the performance on any given passage should fall, begin decision making by checking the student's performance against the frustration level. If the performance falls into the correct **and/or** the incorrect range, **slice** to a lower level. If the performance does not fall within the frustration range, check it against the instructional level. **Stay** at the instructional level if the performance falls into the correct **and/or** incorrect range. If performance does not fall into the instructional range, the student is proficient and should **move** to a new level.

These criteria are guides and not rigid standards. The classroom teacher must make the final decision. It is important to remember that a student must have a **sizable number of errors** and be relatively slow in fluency of performance when he/she first begins working at a level. Otherwise, there is literally no room for **learning**.

Ideally, it would be desirable to obtain a measure of learning on each passage versus a single performance sample. This would tell us in which material(s) the student learned best. However, this would require seven to nine days of information for each passage and in most situations this is not practical.

After selecting material for instruction, we should obtain a daily sample and represent it on the standard chart in Figure 1 to be assured that learning is in fact taking place.

What Are the Most Effective Teaching Tactics?

The student is placed instructionally, the proficiency standards are established, and we know how to monitor progress toward proficiency. The next logical question is what to do instructionally to ensure the student will learn.

Historically, word pronunciation instruction has had an analytical emphasis (even the old sight emphasis materials eventually introduced analytical procedures). This analytical focus is seen in such activities as: detailed error analysis, sound-symbol relationship instruction, blending, syllabication instruction.

Since the outcome goal in the word pronunciation area is to pronounce words, students need to practice pronouncing words, not learn how to analyze them. *Students must learn to read words in exactly the same way they learn to speak them—through repeated exposure to the* **word as a unit**, then by practicing the pronunciation of each word until proficiency is achieved.

If a student can learn to auditorily discriminate thousands of words without analytical instruction, then reproduce these words while speaking, he/she certainly can visually discriminate these same words without analytical instruction.

The fundamental variable which determines how quickly students learn new words, regardless of the instructional approach (e.g., phonics, linguistics, language experience, sight), is how many times they see the word and can practice saying it. Unfortunately, an analytical emphasis has not been neutral but has served to slow down the learning and subsequent retention of words.

The analytical approaches emphasize that accuracy is paramount and that fluency matters very little. For this reason many children are tense, slow, perfectionistic, overcautious and nonspontaneous. (The fear of being wrong! Feel familiar? We have all learned this lesson well.)

We need to calm down about errors, stop requiring perfect performance. Let students work on materials where they have a good many errors, treat errors as positive "opportunities for learning" rather than as appalling ignorance.

Many supplemental teaching procedures (e.g., games, teaching machines, workbook activities, group reading) are also slowing down learning because of the same overemphasis on accuracy.

So what is left? How should we be teaching reading?

The following four teaching tactics are particularly helpful in creating rapid learning:

1. Appropriate slicing of curriculum

+

2. Demonstrate (show)

+

3. Direct practice

+

4. Natural consequences = Most rapid learning

How successful any given reading program is will depend on: 1) how consistently the program employs these teaching tactics and 2) how well the program maintains a focus on the outcome goal of "pronouncing words." These four teaching tactics are not new, but the consistent emphasis we place on them is novel. Remember **they are universal** and applicable to all ages and all curriculum areas.

Therefore in its most generic sense, a reading program should involve: 1) finding the appropriate slice of curriculum (i.e., one in which the student can learn) through the instructional placement process, 2) providing whatever instruction and demonstration is necessary (i.e., telling students the pronounciation words), 3) allowing the student to directly practice pronouncing the words each day and 4) providing feedback regarding progress.

Specific examples, under each of these teaching tactics, are provided in the remainder of this section.

Appropriate Slicing of Curriculum

This concept involves giving students curriculum with more or different concepts if they are proficient on a level, and curriculum with fewer concepts if they are frustrated on a level.

If we give a student 20 vocabulary definitions to learn in a week and he/she learns them in a day, give him/her 50 per week. If he/she learns 50 in a day, give him/her 100 a week.

If a student has difficulty with 20 new sight words per week, slice the list to 15 or 10. If this is still too difficult, try five words, or even two.

Instructional placement means finding the correct slice of curriclum that will truly require learning but will also enable each student to achieve success relatively quickly (e.g., every two weeks). The beautiful thing about the slicing concept is that two students can be learning at exactly the same rate, yet one is learning five concepts in two weeks while the other is learning 100 in two weeks. However, the effort was equal for both, and hopefully, so was the pride of accomplishment.

One of the first things to think of, if the student is either bored or frustrated, is whether to increase the slice of curriculum or slice it thinner.

A list of some different reading materials follows with the most complex at the top and the least complex at the bottom. Moving down these levels provides a student a thinner or less complex slice of curriculum and moving up the levels provides a thicker or more complex slice of curriculum.

above "grade level" material (in-context)

"grade level" material (in-context)

below "grade level" material (in-context)

sentence sheets
(2 to 25 different sentences per sheet)

phrase sheets
(2 to 50 different phrases per sheet)

isolated word sheets (single)
(2 to 100 different words per sheet)

isolated word sheets (doubled)
(2 to 50 different words per sheet)

isolated word sheet (tripled)
(2 to 33 different words per sheet)

prerequisites

If a student remains at a frustration level (based on the instructional placement guides mentioned earlier) in the lowest in-context material, slice to the sentence, phrase and/or word sheets until it is possible to move back into in-context material.

These sheets are made up by horizontally filling up an 8 1/2 x 11 page with sentences, phrases, or words. For instance, a standard isolated word sheet will have 100 words on it. Depending on the slice the student can handle, there could be 100 different words or two different words repeated 50 times each.

For some students it is helpful to have the words on a sheet doubled (e.g., jump/jump/sister/sister, etc.) or tripled to provide more concentrated practice.

Of course a student may be working on more than one level at the same time. A fifth grade student may be reading in-context at an instructional level in a third grade reader and practicing his/her error words and/or new words on an isolated word sheet.

Notice that all the way through the different slicing levels, to the prerequisite level, a word pronunciation focus is maintained. There is not a diversion into an "error analysis" program.

Demonstration (Show)

Often our verbal explanations are too abstract. Consequently, it is essential to **show** students what to do and sometimes guide them through the activity a number of times before letting them practice on their own.

By doing a good job of instructional placement (placing a student on an appropriate slice of curriculum), the need for elaborate explanations and demonstrations is reduced. Often we are required to provide elaborate and repeated explanations and demonstrations because the curriculum placement is too difficult.

The basic demonstration necessary in word pronunciation is correctly pronouncing new words. Demonstrating fluent, accurate reading, on material a student is working on, will also provide a model for her/him to follow.

Direct Practice

Direct practice refers to practicing the exact skill(s) or concept(s) to be learned. (i.e., outcome goals). **Indirect practice** involves practicing activities related to the skill or concept, but it does not involve practicing the actual skill(s) or concept(s).

In the word pronunciation area, this means working in materials which require pronouncing words versus fill-in or matching activities in workbooks, playing academic games, watching filmstrips, etc. While working on the word pronunciation areas, allow at least

45 minutes a day for a student to practice reading. Following are listed some of the different practice options to employ:

1. Re-read material (e.g., word sheets, pages of books, stories) in a timed format.
2. Encourage students to think of (visualize) the words they are learning--inner practice.
3. Tape record selection of a proficiency level and have students read in unison with the tape.
4. Have a "practice sign-off card" for students to have signed during the week, each time they read to a person outside the classroom.
5. Transfer practice (e.g., if a student learns a word in one textbook, have him/her practice finding and saying the word in a half-dozen other sources).
6. Use pacing or flashing devices that can be set at a proficiency level (e.g., language master, controlled reader).
7. After achieving oral reading proficiency on in-context material, have students practice reading the material silently.
8. If students learn to mark their errors during practice sessions, have them practice these words on isolated word, phrase or sentence sheets.

Direct repeated practice is the one procedure that is essential for learning. Those things we do proficiently are things we have practiced; many times to the point where the skill is automatic and there is no longer a need to consciously think about doing it. This automatic level is what to strive for in building reading vocabulary.

Natural Consequences

Information regarding use of consequences has been part of classroom knowledge for a number of years. The difference in emphasis suggested here is to concentrate on those events that are a natural outgrowth of how the student behaves, rather than artificially devised consequences. For example, the natural reward for performing well is to see a numerical gain in correct performance and/or a numerical loss in error performance. By doing a good job of instructional placement, a student should see improvements nearly every day until proficiency is achieved.

Following are a few specific reward ideas relating to the word pronunciation area.

Reward Ideas

1. For students not reading in-context, use "reading in a book" as a reward for achieving proficiency on word, phrase or sentence sheets.
2. Have students identify words in library books, newspapers, recipes, directions, etc. that they want to learn. Provide reward for mastering (use proficiency criteria) these words on their own.
3. Have a reading party! Students bring their own material to read. Have refreshments. Buy, sell, and/or trade books; have dramatic readings, free silent reading, etc.
4. Allow students to skip a portion of a book for reading a designated section proficiently.
5. Show improvement on standard chart.
6. Let students decide which stories to read
7. Take pictures of students while reading.
8. When students achieve proficiency, make an audio tape of their selections.

In summary, the instructional emphasis being suggested is similar to how the old "sight emphasis" programs introduced and practiced new words (prior to when these programs begin phonics instruction). However, there are two crucial differences: 1) The sight emphasis programs did not define proficiency in terms of accuracy and fluency and consequently students often did not get enough practice on new words to ensure long-term retention. 2) The programs did not fully grasp how thinly to slice material to find an instructional level for the slowest learning students.

This section has diverged from the measurement focus by recommending specific teaching tactics. However, the ultimate proof of teaching effectiveness rests with our measure of learning. If no learning is occurring in the existing instructional program, then regardless of the teaching tactics or materials being used, some changes need to be made.

Reading Comprehension

As much as the area of "reading" comprehension is discussed, it is seldom, if ever, an isolated problem. First of all, it is somewhat deceptive to say that the goal of reading instruction is comprehension. This is certainly true, but it is also the goal of everything else we do in school. Secondly, it is possible to teach a student the skills of comprehension (or thinking) using stimulus procedures other than print (e.g., still or motion pictures, recalling an experience, listening).

Very few students, who have word pronunciation proficiency in specific reading material, will have difficulty in comprehending this material. The vast majority of students who are referred for "reading" comprehension problems do not understand what they read because they lack fluency and/or accuracy in word pronunciation skills.

Those students who truly have a *reading* comprehension problem will have a generalized comprehension (thinking) problem that can be evaluated through the other stimulus procedures equally as well as through print.

Certainly the comprehension (thinking skills) area is fundamental to the entire educational process. It is vital that we learn to teach and evaluate in this area, particularly for students who have thinking skill problems. However, bear in mind that comprehension is not a concept exclusively or uniquely tied to reading/printed material.

In an abbreviated form, the remainder of this section will cover the same questions that were dealt with in the word pronunciation section. By reflecting on the word pronunciation discussion you should be able to follow this abbreviated format.

What Are the Outcome Goals of Reading Comprehension?

If we should be teaching the same skills in school that students will need in the real world, we are on the wrong track as it relates to reading comprehension. Characteristically, the skill students perform in school is "answering oral or written questions about material read". When is the last time you did that in your day to day activities?

The reading comprehension skills we do use in daily life which should be emphasized in school are:

1. summarizing information in your own words (e.g., talking with a friend about a novel, a newspaper editorial, a magazine article)
2. following written directions (e.g., recipes, common forms, repairing or assembling directions)
3. asking questions (e.g., Before we pick out a novel we may ask--What is it about? What else has the author written? I wonder if I will like this book?)

The skill most frequently used in daily living is "summarizing information in your own words." Consequently, the most school time should be spent on this skill.

What are the Prerequisites to Reading Comprehension?

1. Proficient oral language
2. Proficient word pronunciation skills[4]

Table 3

What Constitutes Reading Comprehension Proficiency?

Pinpoint	Proficiency Standard
Summarizes information in your own words	20-30 correct pieces of information/minute 2 or fewer incorrect pieces of information/minute
Follows written directions	5-30 correct/minute 2 or fewer incorrect/minute
Asks questions	10-20 correct/minute 2 or fewer incorrect/minute

What Procedures and Materials Should We Use to Evaluate Reading Comprehension Performance?

Summarizing information in your own words. After students have finished reading a particular selection they should "summarize in their own words" what they read to the teacher, a partner, or another classroom helper. Ideally, the summary should be one minute (to eliminate necessity for dividing) but two or three minute summaries may be necessary for longer reading assignments.

The summary is done at a normal conversational pace and each time a correct (or incorrect) piece of information is stated, the recorder makes a correct or incorrect tally. As in the word pronunciation area, this correct and error information is represented graphically.

[4]It is important to remember that we can and should be working on listening, free-recall, and picture comprehension until a student achieves word pronunciation proficiency in some reading material.

Following written directions Ideally, the materials used here come from the real world (e.g., forms, policies, phone books, recipes, building and assembling directions).

To assess performance, establish a certain time period for evaluation (e.g., 10 minutes) and count up the number of directions followed correctly and incorrectly. Dividing the correct and error counts by the time segment provides the standard "performance per minute" unit to chart, and compare to the proficiency standards.

Asking questions This can be done before and/or after reading a selection. This pinpoint also requires a recorder to keep track of the correct and incorrect questions asked. A one-minute sample time should be sufficient for this area.

How Do We Determine Instructional Placement?

The guides in Table 4 can be used for instructional placement in the "summarizing information in your own words" area.

There are not similar guides that have been tested for the "following directions" and "asking questions" areas. However, you can approximate these guides by using the proficiency standards and working down from these as was done in the "summarizing information" area.

Table 4

Level	Performance Criteria	Action
Proficient:	20-30 pieces of information stated correctly per minute and 2 or fewer correct per minute	Move (to new material)
Instructional:	19-19 pieces of information stated incorrectly per minute and/or 3-6 incorrect per minute	Stay (With this material as an instructional level)
Frustration:	0-9 pieces of information stated correctly per minute and/or 7 or more incorrect per minute	Slice (to find instructional level)

What Are the Most Effective Teaching Tactics?

The four basic teaching tactics are universal so they stay the same even though the curriculum area changes. Consequently, the best way to ensure learning is to **demonstrate** desired performance in the various comprehension skills; provide students with the opportunity to **directly practice** "summarizing information in their own words," "following written directions" and "asking questions;" provide **positive feedback** about progress; and increase or decrease the curriculum, **slice**, if learning is not occurring.

Summary

Although it is a slight simplification, I think it is useful to think of the reading area as constituting two basic goals: 1) pronouncing words (orally and then silently) and 2) summarizing information read in your own words. Everything else we do under the guise of reading instruction must be evaluated in terms of its effect on these basic goals.

As long as we follow the proficiency standards, maintain up-to-date charts of student learning, and employ the four basic teaching tactics, we will be successful in teaching students to read regardless of the curriculum being used. However, the more we move away from curriculum and evaluation procedures that emphasize an analytical approach, the more rapidly learning will occur.

It was not possible to go into detail on how to organize a classroom to implement the concepts presented. However, I do not believe that a printed format is the best forum in which to provide detail. I would suggest getting involved in a workshop setting where you can: see "demonstrations," "practice," "slice" when necessary, and "see your own progress."

Every student who has learned to speak has the ability to learn to read and understand what she/he has read. If we work together, at all levels of the educational enterprise, I am confident we can create one reader for every talker. It may never be easy to mix all the right ingredients to make this a reality. However, by employing the concepts presented here, I hope you will find this goal easier to attain.

ON WRITING

Introduction

On January 16, 1981 I tuned in to NBC Nightly News just in time to hear John Chancellor say "a ten year Department of Education study indicates that 25% of secondary students sampled are not proficient in one or more of the basic writing skills. Students interviewed indicated there was little writing instruction in school and little opportunity to practice writing."

The procedures and concepts necessary to rapidly remedy this situation are shared with you in this monograph. A sizable portion of the information presented will conflict with your present beliefs and practices. Please **neither accept nor reject** the information out of hand. Instead, try out the ideas with an open mind, following your own common sense, then draw your own conclusions.

This article compliments a previous article I wrote on reading which appeared in the December 1979 *Iowa Perspective*. A critical relationship exists between reading and writing. Reading naturally proceeds writing in the same way speaking (and verbal thinking) naturally proceeds reading.

Writing is a visual process. The words, concepts, and structures to be written must first be visualized. This visualization training, through reading, is the way we learn to become independent writers--to learn to proofread our own writing.

To eliminate confusion and make learning to write rapid and rewarding, prior proficiency in reading words and structures is necessary. This means delaying work on beginning writing skills until the letters, words, and simple punctuation and capitalization concepts can be **read proficiently** (i.e., 150-250 words correct/minute **and** 5 or fewer errors/minute).

To communicate to themselves and others, all students need to first learn real world writing activities (e.g., filling out an application form, making a grocery list, writing a personal letter). This basic information may be all there is time to teach the slowest learning youngsters.

Too often confusion is created by moving to a creative or literary level of instruction before basics are mastered. Teaching "creative writing"[1] needs to be delayed until proficiency has been achieved in "writing a simple, coherent paragraph."

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[1]Begin work on "creative thinking" as soon as a child enters school (as well as at home). When the basic writing skills have been mastered, these skills can be combined with creative thinking to produce creative writing.

Overview

The writing curriculum is divided into the following nine areas: (1) handwriting, (2) spelling, (3) capitalization, (4) punctuation, (5) sentence structure, (6) paragraph structure, (7) grammatical usage, (8) vocabulary usage, and (9) creative writing. The focus of this monograph is on the basic writing skills (i.e., areas 1 - 8).

The concepts of pinpointing, proficiency, evaluation procedures and materials, instructional placement, learning measurement, generic teaching tactics, and classroom organization are common to each of these areas.

The remainder of the Overview section is devoted to unpacking these concepts in some detail. These concepts will then form the framework for discussing each of the eight basic writing subdivisions.

Pinpointing

Why do we write? What are our outcome goals? The first step in better understanding any curriculum area is to **pinpoint** the outcome goals. Below is a listing of the outcome goals of writing. They are listed in an estimated "most to least performed" in daily activities.

General Outcome Goal: Our students will be able to fill out forms, make lists, and write prose accurately and fluently.

Specific Outcome Goals:[2]

We write:

1. **To sign our name (signature)**
   e.g., - on application forms
   - on correspondence
   - on checks
   - on legal documents

2. **To make a list**
   e.g., - grocery list
   - things to do
   - words to learn

3. **To fill out forms**
   e.g., - tax forms
   - order forms
   - bank withdrawal & deposit slips
   - employment applications
   - change of address forms
   - membership applications
   - financial agreements
   - loan applications
   - personal checks

4. **To label objects or places**
   e.g., - tool locations
   - food jars
   - captions on pictures

5. **To write an informal (personal) letter or card (prose)**
   e.g., - personal letter
   - thank-you note
   - write or answer an invitation
   - post card
   - greeting card

6. **To address an envelope or package** (both return and mailing address)

7. **To copy something**
   e.g., - a recipe
   - directions to a location

8. **To write a summary (prose)**
   e.g., - of own thoughts (personal log or diary)
   - of an experience
   - of a movie

9. **To write directions**
   e.g., - to a location
   - for a game

10. To take a written exam
    e.g., - driver's license test
    - civil service test

11. To write an add for a newspaper

12. Job Specific
    e.g., - writing traffic ticket (police officer)
    - writing speech (politician, college professor)
    - writing sermon (priest)
    - writing itinerary and stock sheets (truck drivers)
    - writing prescriptions (physician, dentist)
    - writing invoices and purchase orders (secretaries)
    - writing shipping & receiving papers (warehouse supervisor)
    - writing sales slips (sales clerk)

[2]Many of the outcome goals performed most frequently in daily activities are infrequently practiced in school. Prose writing is emphasized in school, yet with the exception of writing personal letters (which is reducing with the ease of long distance telephoning), most of us infrequently write prose.

13. **To write a formal (business) letter or note (prose)**
    e.g., - letter of application (employment, school)
    - write or answer formal invitation
    - letter to public official

14. **To write a formal report (prose)**
    e.g., - book report
    - minutes of a meeting
    - research report
    - accident report
    - formal presentation notes

15. **To write lecture notes (prose)**

16. **To write an essay or story (prose)**
    e.g., - screen play
    - article for publication
    - autobiography
    - fiction or nonfiction story

17. **To write a poem**

Integration of all eight writing areas is necessary to accomplish the most complex outcome goals. However, when enough skill has been acquired to perform the simplest outcome goals (e.g., "a list" of things to do today) these outcome goals should become part of our classroom practice activities.

Each of the writing subdivisions encompasses a number of specific skills. We have developed a conceptual model to organize these skills. The model is called a **Curriculum Ladder**. As each writing area is considered, a ladder for that area will be presented. A portion of the Curriculum Ladder for punctuation is shown in Figure 1.

On each Curriculum Ladder there are four levels. The **Overview Level** (color coded in green) encompasses all skills on a ladder. The **Inventory Levels** (color coded in red) encompass a large number of curriculum skills or concepts. The **Screening Levels** (color coded in white) break into smaller portions what is covered in the Inventory Levels. The **Item Levels** (color coded in blue) further breaks down the Screening Levels into specific skills and concepts.[3]

This four level breakdown increases dramatically the number of self-contained curriculum levels available for instructional placement.

The following points are important in understanding and using the ladders.

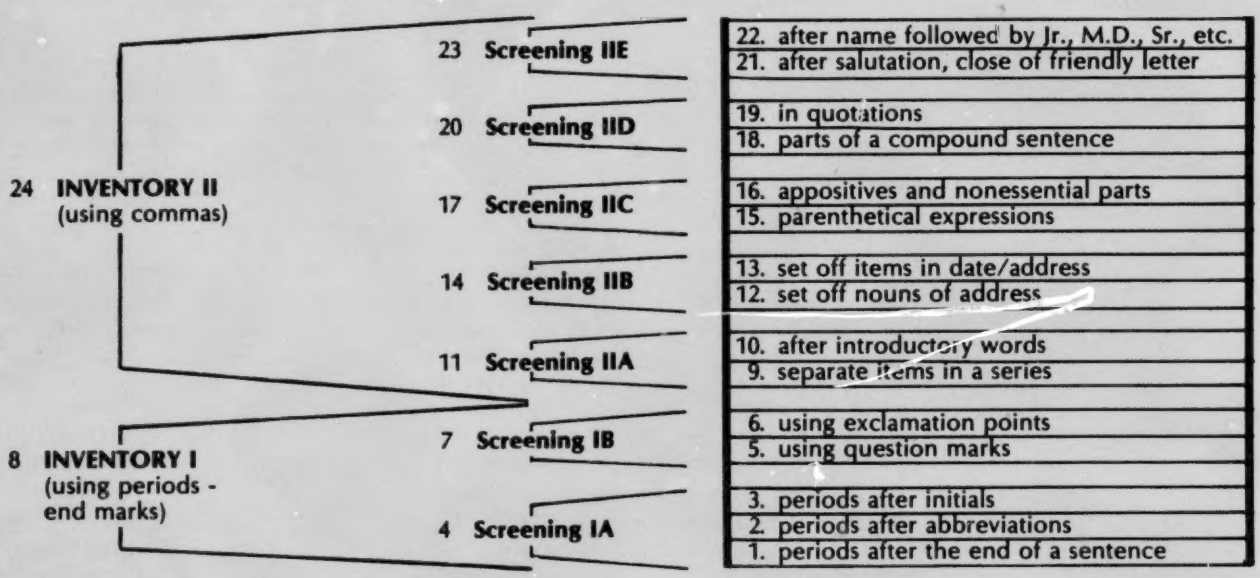
1. A performance objective statement starts at the bottom of each ladder. The statement is completed by adding any level from the ladder (e.g., Our students will be able to accurately and fluently punctuate in writing: "using periods and end marks" - Inventory I).

2. **The ladders are not intended to designate a sequence for introducing skills**. They provide an exhaustive listing (not sequence) of the skills in a given curriculum area.

   The reading materials must determine the **general** sequence of introducing: handwriting words, spelling words, capitalization and punctuation concepts, grammar concepts, sentence and paragraph structures, and new vocabulary. The literature materials establish the

[3]The ladders grow out of the slicing concept which is one of the generic teaching tactics to be discussed later in this Overview section.

Figure 1 Example of Partial Curriculum Ladder


24 INVENTORY II
(using commas)
23 Screening IIE
20 Screening IID
17 Screening IIC
14 Screening IIB
11 Screening IIA
8 INVENTORY I
(using periods - end marks)
7 Screening IB
4 Screening IA
22. after name followed by Jr., M.D., Sr., etc.
21. after salutation, close of friendly letter
19. in quotations
18. parts of a compound sentence
16. appositives and nonessential parts
15. parenthetical expressions
13. set off items in date/address
12. set off nouns of address
10. after introductory words
9. separate items in a series
6. using exclamation points
5. using question marks
3. periods after initials
2. periods after abbreviations
1. periods after the end of a sentence

Item:
Our students will be able to accurately and fluently punctuate in writing:

general sequence of introducing creative writing and literary concepts. (This process promotes the development of visual pictures, mechanically and creatively, which are used to proofread what is written.)

The **specific** sequence of introduction for each student must be determined by the interaction between the pupil's performance and the teacher's decision making.

3. Only "application skills" are listed on the ladders - those skills to retain and make use of in performing outcome goals. Any related skills or procedures are instructional activities, keyed to the appropriate skill on the ladder.

4. The ladders are used as proficiency checklists - an alternative to grading systems.

When goals and objectives are precisely stated and organized, we are more secure and confident, and therefore freer to be creative teachers.

Proficiency

Once what is to be learned has been stated clearly, we can ask "When will I know that a student has learned (is **proficient** with) a skill or concept?"

The concept of proficiency is best communicated by doing a short activity. (**Please** participate in this activity. It is crucial to your emphatic understanding of the difference between "proficient" and "nonproficient" performance.)

Directions:

1. Please get a pencil, an 8½" by 11" piece of paper and a device that can time for one minute (e.g., a watch with a sweep hand, another person).

2. Copy in script (fluently and accurately) as much of the following passage as you can in exactly one minute. If you finish the passage before the minute has elapsed, start over.

If others often plague thee
And do or say evil of thee,
Think also they came here
Without having asked for it.
Think, though you may not like it,
You, too, plagued others often.
As this cannot be altered,
Think gently of everyone.[4]

Please Do Not Read on Until You Have Finished the Above Activity

3. Now, again for one minute, copy the same passage fluently and accurately in script, but this time do it with your nonpreferred hand.

Please Do Not Read on Until You Have Finished the Above Activity

With your nonpreferred hand, did you stop performing before the minute was up? Did you say "this is ridiculous" and complete the minute but stop trying? Were you frustrated? Did it make you angry to be nonproficient? Did you want to escape? Did you laugh it off?

These are **exactly** the feelings and reactions students demonstrate at skill and concept levels which are too difficult. The difficult to reach pupils are often not proficient on writing mechanics, not to mention more complex creative skills. Students are asked to write stories and themes (with their preferred hand), with handwriting performance no better than your nonpreferred hand performance. Can **you imagine** writing a theme with your nonpreferred hand?

Using a standard accuracy criteria (e.g., correct = legible, incorrect = illegible), count how many **letters** (not words) are correct and how many are incorrect for each sample.

Your information should look something like the following:

Preferred Hand
(Proficient)
+ 150 correct/minute
+ 2 incorrect/minute

Nonpreferred Hand
(Nonproficient)
+ 50 correct/minute
+ 7 incorrect/minute

These performance frequencies depict the only two dimensions of academic proficiency. One is **accuracy**, the relationship of the number of correct responses to the number of incorrect responses (e.g., 150 versus 2; 50 versus 7). The other dimension is **fluency**, the total response production (correct and incorrect) made in a standard time period (e.g., 152/minute versus 57/minute).

Fluency and accuracy are **equally** important since both the **inaccurate** and **slow performing** student is of concern. Presently, in our schools, accuracy is terribly over-emphasized (e.g., perfect performance) and fluency is largely ignored (e.g., 95% accuracy = mastery). This lack of proficiency balance between fluency and accuracy is the single most important reason many students are incompetent in written communication.

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[4]Inscription to a godchild, March 13, 1933 by Albert Einstein. Found in: Clark, Ronald *Einstein: The Life and Times*. New York: World Publishing Co. (Avon Books), 1971.

[5]Two areas related to writing that understand and demand this balance are typing and shorthand.

Increased writing **fluency** has been shown to correlate with increased ratings of story quality (Van Houten, et al., 1974) and with increased **accuracy** in the mechanical aspects of writing (Brigham, et al., 1972; Van Houten, et al., 1974).

The over-emphasis on accuracy treats written communication as art work, rather than a fluid means of communication and thinking. This accuracy emphasis creates people who are tense, slow, perfectionistic, over-cautious and nonspontaneous - **the fear of being wrong**!

Accuracy is measured by **counting** the number of correct and incorrect responses. Fluency is measured by monitoring performance over a **standard time** interval (e.g., one minute, two minutes, five minutes).

A summary of writing proficiency standards is presented in Figure 2. In keeping with the above discussion these standards are stated in terms of a correct and incorrect standard (accuracy) over time (fluency). As noted by the footnote on Figure 2, the incorrect standard is usually two or fewer per minute. Consequently, the incorrect standard is not repeated each time the correct criteria are given.

The "two or fewer incorrect" standard is used to allow for random error and to communicate that achieving perfection is unnecessary.

To verify consistent mastery, require the achievement of a proficiency standard, for a given skill or concept level, for two or three consecutive days.

Maintaining standard (i.e., they apply to all people) accuracy and fluency criteria means that the slowest learners will achieve proficiency on fewer skills and concepts. A slow learner may spend 13 years in school and achieve proficiency in skills equivalent to a fifth grade level. This is 13 years of effort for 5 "traditionally" defined years of growth. However, he is proficient at the fifth grade level, therefore as competent as any other fifth grade level student in the school. He is competitive for any job that requires fifth grade level skills. This is a very different process than social promotion through school, being exposed to many areas but mastering very few.

Figure 2 Summary of Writing Proficiency Standards

GENERAL OUTCOME GOAL: Our students will be able to fill out forms, make lists, and write prose accurately and fluently.

I. Handwriting Skills	Correct Range/ Minute*	II. Spelling Skills	Correct Range/ Minute*	III. Capitalization Punctuation Skills	Correct Range/ Minute*
writes **letters** in words correctly	100-200	1. spells **letters-in-place** correctly in sentences and paragraphs	100-200	1. writes capital letters correctly on practice/ evaluation sheets	50-70
writes **letters** in sentences and paragraphs correctly	100-200	2. spells **words** correctly in prose writing	20-40 (& 99% correct)	2. capitalizes words correctly in prose writing	1-10 (& 99% correct)
writes **words** in prose writing correctly	20-40 (& 99% correct)			3. writes punctuation marks correctly on practice/ evaluation sheets	50-70
				4. punctuates correctly in prose writing	1-10 (& 99% correct)

*Only correct performance ranges are indicated since regardless of the skill the incorrect range is usually two or fewer.

Figure 2 Summary of Writing Proficiency Standards (Cont.)

IV. Sentence/ Paragraph Structure Skills	Correct Range/ Minute*	V. Grammar/ Vocabulary Usage Skills	Correct Range/ Minute*	VI. Prose Writing Summary	Proficiency Standards
1. writes sentences correctly on practice/evaluation sheets and in prose writing	1-10 (& 99% correct)	1. writes grammatically correct words on practice/evaluation sheets and in prose writing	20-40 (& 99% correct)	**Fluency** 1. total words written	20-40/ minute
2. forms and organizes paragraphs correctly on practice/evaluation sheets and in prose writing	.5-2 (& 99% correct)	2. writes semantically correct words on practice/evaluation sheets and in prose writing	20-40 (& 99% correct)	**Accuracy** 1. writes words correctly	99% correct
				2. spells words correctly	99% correct
				3. capitalizes words correctly	99% correct
				4. punctuates written work correctly	99% correct
				5. writes sentences correctly	99% correct
				6. forms and organizes paragraphs correctly	99% correct
				7. writes grammatically correct words	99% correct
				8. writes semantically correct words	99% correct

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Evaluation Procedures and Materials

To facilitate rapid learning and desired transfer to the real world, instructional practice and evaluation must stay close to writing outcome goals. The evaluation procedures and materials are the same as those used for instructional practice. Consequently, we often refer to the evaluation area as "practice/evaluation".

Three broad categories are distinguished in evaluation procedures and materials.

(1) **Forms, lists, labels, exams** (e.g. application forms, daily schedule list, pictures to label, multiple choice exams)

The procedures and materials for this category are drawn from the real world. Simulation activities, using these procedures and materials, are then set up for practice and evaluation.

(2) **Prose Writing**

This category covers the procedures and materials necessary to perform the various "prose writing outcome goals" (e.g., write a personal or business letter, write an essay or story, write a report).

A certain degree of standardization is necessary in the format of prose writing evaluations. This standardization creates greater accuracy and efficiency in evaluating different students' work. More importantly, it enables student comparisons from week to week and from month to month. An example of the type of standard procedures recommended is presented later in the grammatical and vocabulary usage section.

(3) Practice/Evaluation Sheets

These sheets are developed to practice or evaluate the specific skills involved in performing categories (1) and (2) above.

The practice/evaluation sheets are sometimes a step removed from the outcome goal focus of categories (1) and (2). There are times, developmentally, when enough skill has not been acquired to fill out a form or write a paragraph.

As proficiency is gained on the practice/evaluation sheets, the skills are integrated into outcome goal performance.[6]

A standard process is followed in developing the practice/evaluation sheets. The general process is outlined here. Specific examples are presented under each of the eight writing areas. This information will enable you to develop your own sheets.

[6]Do not assume proficiency on a skill in isolation (e.g., in a workbook, on a practice/evaluation sheet) directly corresponds to the ability to apply this skill. An example of this lack of correspondence is the student who consistently achieves 100% on grammar workbook pages, but frequently writes grammatically incorrect sentences in prose assignments.

To substantiate proficiency on one of the seventeen outcome goals evaluate at the outcome goal level.

The practice/evaluation sheets are designed and color coded to follow the Curriculum Ladders. The Overview sheet (run on green paper) checks all skills listed on a ladder. Sheets are made up for each Inventory (red), Screening (white) and Item (blue) level. Each level (Overview, Inventory, Screening, or Item) has a number of different forms (e.g., 10 to 30). This enables the same skills to be practiced but in varied formats.

Writing in the correct answers on each practice/evaluation sheet, and running these on yellow provides a correction sheet. Students independently, and through buddy systems, use these sheets to correct their work.

Figure 3 represents a standard format for developing practice/evaluation sheets. Maintaining this standard format saves time for both teachers and students by eliminating misinterpretations and question asking.

The components of the standard practice/evaluation sheet are numbered on Figure 3 and each numbered component is explained on the following page.

Figure 3 Standard Format for Developing Practice/Evaluation Sheets

(1) Name _____ (8) Correct/Minute _____

Date ____/____/____ Incorrect/Minute _____

(6) Description of Skills or Concepts/Slicing Classification (7)

(2) Student Instructions
(3) Correction Instructions

(4) "Answer Box" (may not always be needed or desired)

(9) Proficiency =
(10) Time =

(5)		(11) Say and/or	Write
1.		( )	( )
2.		( )	( )
3.		( )	( )
4.		( )	( )
5.	"Space for Skills or Concepts"	( )	( )
6.		( )	( )
7.		( )	( )
8.		( )	( )
9.		( )	( )
10.		( )	( )

(13)

(12) Start Over/New Sheet

Note: horizontal vs. vertical format is intentional

(14) Run on _____

1. **Name and Date**: If the sheet is to be consumable, the student should place his name and the date in these spaces. If the sheet is used under a plastic overlay or for an oral sample, it is not necessary to write in the name and date. (When a sheet is run through a thermo-ditto or thermo-stencil process the name and date will not copy. In this case merely instruct the student to place his name and the date in the upper left hand corner.)

2. **Student Instructions**: A place to indicate concise instructions to the student (e.g., "write definitions left to right").

3. **Correction Instructions**: A place to indicate procedures for correcting performance (e.g., "count correct and incorrect definitions").

4. **Answer Box**: A place to put answers to the items in the body of the sheet. (Learning occurs more rapidly by copying a correct answer or immediately confirming an answer than through practicing errors.) *Note: The answer box is used only for practice sheets not evaluation sheets.*

5. **Row Numbers**: The row numbers help students begin on a different row each time they practice on one day, or from one day to the next. This procedure serves the purpose of creating different forms within the same sheet.

6. **Description of Skills or Concepts**: To indicate the skill or concept area, the sheet focuses on (e.g., U.S. Constitution Vocabulary, Capitalization of Proper Nouns).

7. **Slicing Classification**: This is the place to indicate whether the sheet represents an Overview, Inventory, Screening or Item level. This classification process greatly facilitates organization, filing and retrival of the many practice/evaluation sheets.

8. **Correct/Minute - Incorrect/Minute**: This provides a space to record correct and incorrect performance for a practice or evaluation session. (As in the case of "name and date", the correct and incorrect cells do not need to show up on the sheet unless the sheet is to be kept as a permanent record or taken home. The correct and incorrect information will not show up when sheets are run through a thermo-duplication process.)

9. **Proficiency**: Indicates the correct and incorrect criteria in terms of responses per minute to be used on this sheet. The information is written in this form- "60/2." This example means, 60 correct responses per minute with 2 or fewer incorrect responses per minute, are required to achieve proficiency and move on to more complex skills.

10. **Time**: Indicates the sample time in minutes to be used on this sheet (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 5, 10-minutes).

11. **Say and/or Write**: The parenthesis below "say or write" is where the **cumulative** response count for each row is indicated. If the performance can be either oral or written, include both say and write counts. When the performance is only oral or only written put just the oral or the written count. The individual row count facilitates "efficient" correcting. (For oral counts, count each word or phrase as one; for written counts, count each letter, symbol or digit as one.)

12. **Start Over/New Sheet**: Place this at the bottom of a sheet when enough items will not fit to enable continuous performance during the entire sample time. These statements serve as prompts to **start** the sheet **over**, for an oral sample, or start a **new sheet** for a written sample.

13. **Thermo-Duplication Line**: Information typed **outside** this line will not be picked up on a thermo-ditto or stencil.

14. **Color Code Indication**: Indicates the color that the particular sheet should be run on when it is duplicated (e.g., Run on blue).

A few additional comments regarding the practice/evaluation sheets are listed below.

1. Always have more responses on a sheet than can be completed in the designated sample time. (If enough responses do not fit on one sheet, instruct the student to start over for an oral response, or start a new sheet, for a written response.)

2. Always make sheets in a horizontal format. The horizontal form is more compatible with overhead projectors, file folders, classroom desks, and filing cabinets.

3. If the set of responses (e.g., five vocabulary words) for a given sheet does not fill up the sheet, repeat the responses to fill

up the sheet. (The "total set of responses" must be **randomly** repeated rather than randomly repeating each response.)

4. When possible, build sheets that are performed over a one minute sample time. This makes it easy to compute the correct/minute and incorrect/minute information.

Self-Evaluation

Rapid learning of any skills or concepts occurs by systematic evaluation and practice each day. Yet, classroom teachers do not have the time to correct 25-30 pieces of written work each day (elementary) or 150 pieces per day (secondary).

Below is a two-step procedure for dealing with this problem.

(1) Four days a week have a combination of student self-evaluation and classmate correction (e.g., exchange written work with a classmate). This provides four days of short evaluations plus needed practice in proofreading.

(2) Once a week the written work is checked by the teacher (a "validation check"). This check serves to evaluate whether the existing instruction, practice and proofreading is working.[7]

Initially, there is some noise in the evaluation process by turning it over to the students for four days a week. However, students need feedback about their progress more often than once a week. The choice is to let pupils become more involved in their own education or restrict this involvement by checking all performance.

The validation system prohibits movement to a new skill level until proficiency is demonstrated at a present level. The proof is in the validation. Is greater student involvement, with its possibilities of some cheating and less accuracy in correcting, more of a hinderance or a benefit to learning? We have found it to be a benefit.

The yellow correction sheets, used with the practice/evaluation materials, are intended to support self-evaluation. If necessary, provide self-evaluation practice by using materials with intensional writing errors. Students can practice finding and correcting these errors.

Steps in Conducting an Evaluation Sample

Listed below are the general steps to follow when conducting an evaluation sample regardless of the writing area.

1. **Helpers**: Identify persons to help in dictation of material and/or correction of papers (e.g., classmates, older students, aides, parent helpers).

2. **Materials**: Student gets pencil and appropriate level of materials to work on.

3. **Sample Time**: Whenever possible, evaluate performance for one minute. This simplifies the recording and correcting process. This is easy to do on Item level practice/evaluation sheets since there are fewer skills checked at these levels. Two to ten minute samples are often necessary at the Overview, Inventory, and Screening levels as well as when performing any of the seventeen outcome goals. (Note: Performance must be monitored for a standard time in minutes, so fluency can be evaluated.)

4. **Timer**: Use an accurate timer with an auditory signal to keep track of the sample time (e.g., audio-tape timer, photographic timer). Audio-tapes are convenient for dictation assignments across all areas in writing. When this is done the tape serves to time the evaluation sample.

5. **Individual or Group**: Evaluation samples are done individually at student desks, in a learning or validation center or in a large group with everyone on their appropriate curriculum slice.

6. **Start Timing:** Start the timing using an audiotape or auditory signal timer. (Whether live or on tape, start samples by saying "Please Begin.")

7. **Stop Timing**: Say "Please Stop" when the tape or auditory signal timer indicates the end of the evaluation sample.

8. **Self-Evaluation**: (a) Count the total number of responses (e.g., script letters written, letters spelled, punctuation used, new words used, etc.); (b) count the number of incorrect responses; (c) subtract the number of incorrect responses from the total to obtain the number correct; (d) if the sample time is longer than one minute, divide the correct and incorrect counts by the sample time to determine the correct and incorrect information "per minute"; (e) if information is to be represented graphically, chart the correct performance with a dot (.) and the incorrect information with an "x" on the appropriate day line. (See the Learning Measurement section to explain use of a graphic display.)

9. **Helper Evaluation**: If a student is unable to accomplish one or more of the self-evaluation steps, have a helper provide assistance.

10. **Validation Check**: Each week select one day's work as a validation check. (This work is not proofread, but immediately handed in.)

[7]Information from the validation checks can be graphically represented to facilitate evaluation of learning. (See the Learning Measurement section.)

In summarizing the evaluation procedures and materials section, remember these additional pointers:

1. A certain portion of the forms, lists, labels and exams; the topics selected for prose writing and the practice/evaluation sheets should relate to the local community, region and state (e.g., a local company's application form, write a story or theme about a recent local issue, practice capitalization and spelling of local names).
2. Require the use of pencils on all written work. This facilitates ongoing self-corrections and later proofreading corrections.
3. Much of the writing practice and evaluation can be done through tape recorded dictation. Each classroom needs one tape recorder (with headphones) for every five students. The tape recorder provides an independent and individualized means of practice and evaluation.
4. Ideally conduct and record short (e.g., one to five minute) evaluation samples each day. This format is also the most effective teaching procedure. (See the direct practice section under Generic Teaching Tactics.) A sizable portion of teaching time must be allotted for timed direct practice on the same skills which are evaluated. For example, conduct a one minute evaluation sample on sentence spelling. Have ten one-minute sentence-spelling direct-practice sessions as part of the spelling instruction period.
5. In self, helper, and teacher correcting, circle correct responses and leave incorrect responses unmarked. Accentuate the positive. Each circle serves as a small reward compared with a paper filled with "red error marks". If errors are corrected, circle these in a different color, ending with a totally positive paper.

Instructional Placement

Once evaluation procedures and materials, and corresponding proficiency criteria are established, it is possible to determine where to place each student instructionally.

There are three different levels involved in instructional placement decision making. (1) The **proficiency level** - the student is competent (i.e., fluent and accurate) with the skills or concepts and moves on to material with new skills or concepts. (2) The **instructional (or learning level)** - the student is not proficient and additional learning is required but the skills or concepts are not too difficult. (3) The **frustration (or nonlearning level)** - the skills or concepts are too difficult for rapid learning to occur.

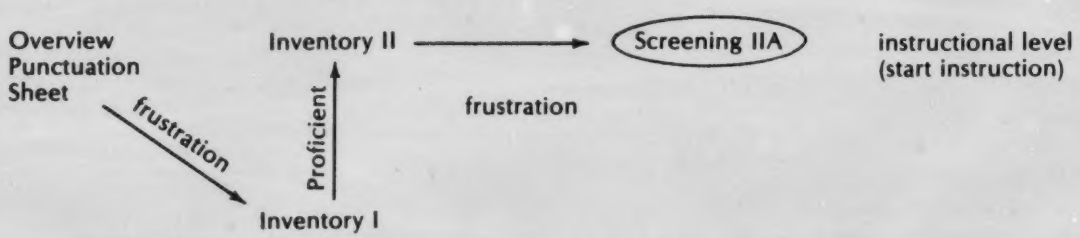
Writing proficiency standards are presented in Figure 2 (page 15). What constitutes a frustration or instructional level is determined by working with each learner. The more students perform, in a performance per minute format, the better they learn what is too frustrating. Performance at an instructional level must have a sizable number of errors and be relatively slow in terms of fluency. Otherwise, there is literally no room for learning.

As an example the instructional placement criteria for one student on a punctuation practice/evaluation sheet may look like the following:

Proficiency	=	50-10 correct/minute **AND** 2 or fewer incorrect/minute
Instructional	=	20-49 correct/minute **AND/OR** 3-10 incorrect/minute
Frustration	=	0-19 correct/minute **AND/OR** 11 or more incorrect/minute

To be proficient, both standards of correct and incorrect performance over time must be present. An instructional or frustration level is identified because performance is too slow (nonfluent) *and/or* too many errors are present.

Following the abbreviated punctuation ladder in Figure 1 (page 13), an instructional placement sequence for one student may look like the following:



Learning Measurement

Measuring learning through frequent evaluation (ideally short samples each day) is essential to having **truly** individualized programs. In fact, the only legitimate definition of an "individualized program" is: each student is rapidly progressing, at his own instructional level, in each academic and social area.

This definition does not require any particular classroom organization, teaching methods, or materials. It requires some means of measuring progress to substantiate that each pupil is learning.

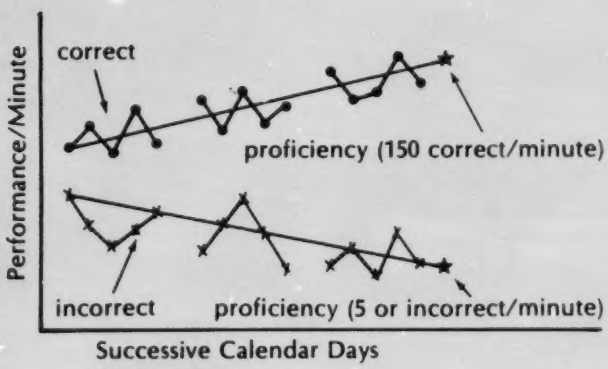
The measurement of learning is an extremely novel and important concept. An inability to measure learning means the inability to find learning problems.

Measuring learning requires taking **repeated** measures of performance over a period of weeks. Giving an achievement test or unit test each day for two weeks, in order to view "change in performance" (i.e., learning), is not feasible. An evaluation, sample of one, two or three minutes each day, across four or five skill or concept areas, is feasible and is being done in many classrooms throughout North America.

The concept of measuring learning is clarified by referring back to the "preferred/nonpreferred" handwriting example. Learning always involves moving from a level of nonproficiency to a level of proficiency. Assume we are working to become proficient with our nonpreferred hand. This requires increasing correct performance from + 50 correct/minute to 150 + correct/minute and decreasing incorrect performance from + 7 incorrect/minute to 2 or fewer incorrect/minute.

Evaluating performance each day provides the measure of progress towards proficiency. This learning data supplies information necessary to change an instructional program if learning is not rapid enough.

Graphically the change in performance (learning) might look like this:



Each dot (.) and "x" combination represents the correct and incorrect performance for one day's evaluation sample. In this example, it took 3 weeks (15 school days) to move from a point of nonproficiency (i.e., 50 correct/minute and 7 incorrect/minute) to proficiency (i.e., 150 correct/minute and 2 or fewer incorrect/minute).

A standard daily chart is used to represent student learning. The chart is shown in Figure 4. For more information regarding how to use the chart, see *Teaching Exceptional Children*, Spring 1971.

Whether daily evaluation is on forms, lists, labels, exams; prose writing and/or practice/evaluation sheets, daily charts of correct and error[8] performance are kept by the student.

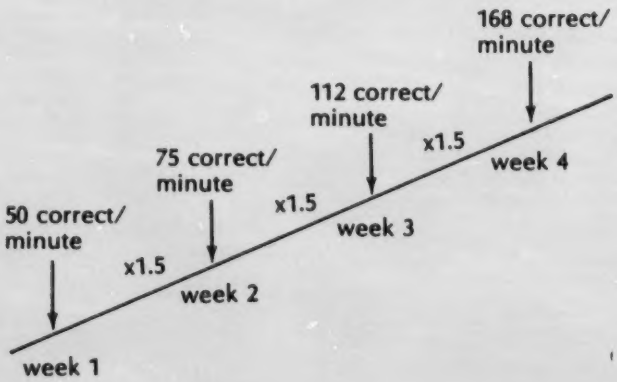
Information on weekly validation checks is maintained on weekly charts[9] by either the teacher or the student.

The charted information, along with periodic curriculum samples, representing school work during a semester or across the entire school year, is powerful information for parent-teacher conferences.

This type of learning measurement for the first time provides a quantitative means of defining readiness. A student is "ready" when she can improve (at a particular skill level) and achieve proficiency with some ease.

This definition does not require learning a certain number of logical prerequisites before working on a particular skill or concept level. **If you can learn a skill you are "ready".**

For example, refer back to the preferred/non-preferred hand exercise. Improvement at 50 percent per week would mean correct performance would look like the following:



A measure of learning compliments the proficiency concept in the decision-making process. Knowing precisely where we are going (proficiency) and having a means to monitor progress toward these goals (a measure of learning) allows us to become highly skilled teachers.

[8]An exception to this is "a prose writing fluency chart" which only charts "total words/minute" (no errors). Similiar to monitoring silent reading fluency.

[9]Daily, weekly, monthly and yearly charts are all available from:
Behavior Research Co.
P.O. Box 3351
Kansas City, KS 66103

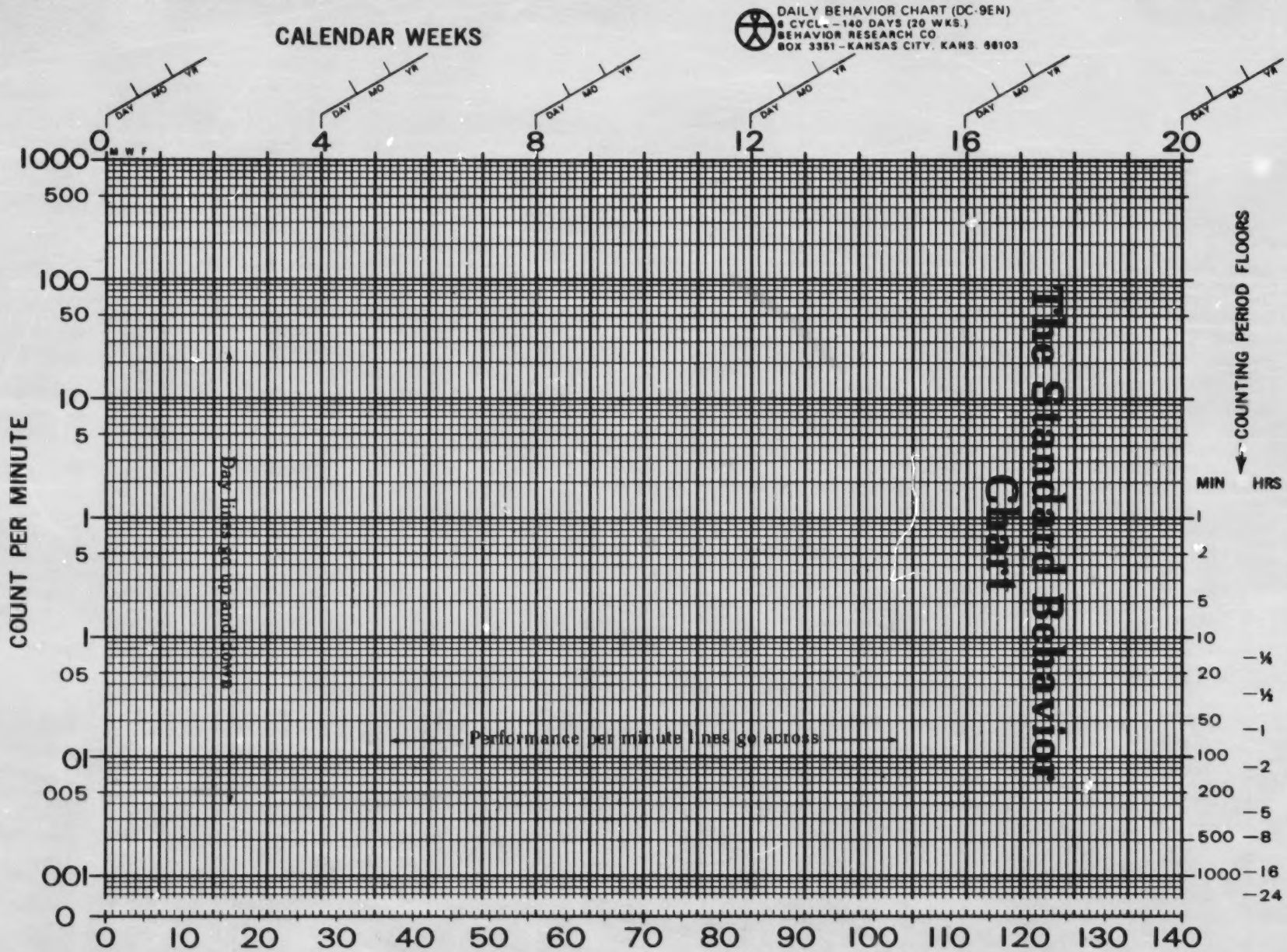
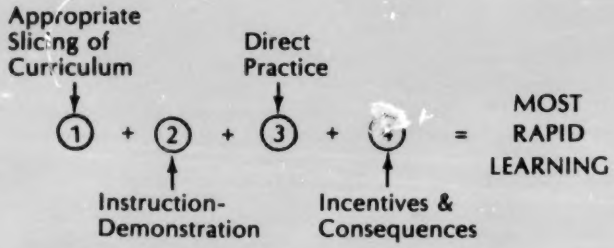


Figure 4 The Standard Behavior Chart

Generic Teaching Tactics

The student is placed instructionally, the proficiency standards are established, a measure of learning exists, and procedures and materials are available to evaluate learning. The next question is what to do instructionally to ensure rapid learning.

The following four generic teaching tactics are particularly helpful in creating rapid learning:


Appropriate Slicing of Curriculum
Direct Practice
1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = MOST RAPID LEARNING
Instruction-Demonstration
Incentives & Consequences

Specific examples, under each generic teaching tactic, are presented in the remainder of this section.

Appropriate Slicing of Curriculum

This concept is clearly depicted by the **Curriculum Ladders** and corresponding practice/evaluation sheets.

Slicing involves changing to curriculum with more and/or different concepts when students are proficient, and to curriculum with fewer and/or different concepts when they are frustrated.

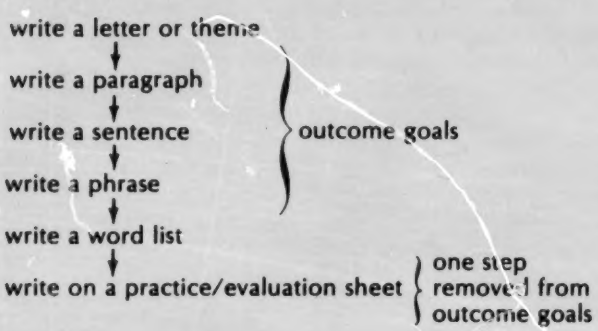
If a student is given 10 new vocabulary words to learn each week but she learns them in a day, give her 20 per week. If she learns 20 in a couple of days, give her 50 or 60 per week.

Another student has difficulty learning 10 new capitalization and punctuation concepts in a month, slice the number to 7 or 5. If this is still too difficult, try three concepts or even one.

Instructional placement involves finding a slice of curriculum which enables each pupil to learn quickly (e.g., every two or three weeks). The slicing concept allows two pupils to learn at exactly the same rate, yet one is learning five concepts in two weeks while the other is learning 100 concepts in two weeks. It is not hard to see why some students could spend 13 years achieving "fifth grade" proficiency.

One of the first things to think of when either frustration or boredom is noted is whether to increase the slice of curriculum or slice it thinner.

An example of different slicing levels in writing is presented below:



Instruction-Demonstration

Most of us who have earned a teaching credential are fairly effective with verbal communication skills. These skills are fundamental to making it through college and highly reinforced in academic settings.

We learn **teaching** has something to do with **talking**. However, **learning** has to do with **doing** (not listening). When we are talking, students are usually not doing -- are not directly practicing what is to be learned. Plus our verbal explanations are often too abstract. Consequently, reduce verbal explanations to a minimum and show students what to do. Sometimes guide them through the activity a number of times before letting them practice independently.

Elaborate and repeated explanations and demonstrations are often required because the curriculum placement is too difficult. By doing a good job of instructional placement (placement on an appropriate slice of curriculum), the need for such explanations and demonstrations is reduced.

Direct Practice

Direct practice involves practicing the exact skills or concepts to be learned (e.g., outcome goals). **Indirect practice** involves practicing activities related to a skill or concept, yet not practicing the actual skill or concept (e.g., **direct practice**: practice writing sentences and paragraphs using correct grammatical structures; **indirect practice**: underlining or circling appropriate parts of speech and verb tenses in grammar workbooks).

Direct practice is the one procedure essential for learning. Those things we do proficiently we have directly practiced. The skill has been practiced to the point of being automatic - there is no longer a need to consciously think about doing it.

This automatic level is what to strive for in the mechanical aspects of writing. Learning to use new writing concepts requires massive amounts of practice, at least 30 minutes each day. Short practice sessions each day are more conducive to rapid learning than are practice sessions once a week.

We have invested a great deal of creative energy in developing "indirect practice activities" to create variety, thus assuming we reduce boredom.[10] These activities are developed with noble intensions yet their effects consistently slow down learning for brighter students and terribly confuse less able ones.

Boredom is eliminated in this process by creating rapid learning of each slice of curriculum and by varying the direct practice format (e.g., different application forms on different days, a different story or theme topic on different days).

Some of the general categories of direct practice applicable to all writing are listed below:

1. **Direct practice** - specific practice on the piece (or pieces) of curriculum identified through the instructional placement process.

[10] I fear a common misinterpretation is to project our boredom with repetitive practice onto our students. Students who are **learning relevant skills quickly** are not bored with repetitive practice.

2. **Inner practice** - mental visualization of skills or concepts at other times than during the instructional time allocated for these skills (e.g., while walking down the street, while brushing your teeth).

3. **Transfer practice** - demonstrating use of a concept in a format and/or setting other than the one in which the concept was learned (e.g., learned correct use of commas on a practice/evaluation sheet, transfer that knowledge to using commas in a sentence).

4. **Application practice** - use of writing skills in performing any of the seventeen outcome goals.

Incentives and Consequences

Information regarding incentives and consequences has been part of classroom knowledge for a number of years. Incentives are designed to move a person (e.g., pupil) to action while consequences are intended to increase or decrease the frequency of that action.

Listed below are some general principles to follow in arranging incentives and consequences.

1. **Emphasize natural incentives and consequences versus those tht are artificially devised.**
   For example, a **natural incentive** exists in our society for learning to read and write. Extol the benefits of learning to read and write versus promising artifical rewards (e.g., tokens, food, free time).
   A **natural consequence** for performing well is to see a numerical gain in correct performance and/or a numerical loss in incorrect performance. A natural consequence for performing poorly is to have correct performance decline and/or errors rise.

2. **Acentuate the positive, eliminate the negative.** Concentrate on attending to correct academic behavior and appropriate social behavior versus incorrect performance and inappropriate behavior.
   For example, when correcting written work, circle correct responses and leave incorrect responses unmarked. Notice and comment about appropriate social behavior; when possible, ignore inappropriate behavior.

3. **Trust the student.** Work with pupils as partners. Assume their comments are honest and relevant in regards to the motivational effects of various materials, incentives, and consequences.

4. **Encourage self-evaluation at all levels of the writing process..**

A writing program must involve: (1) finding the **appropriate slice of curriculum** (e.g., placement on: one of the seventeen outcome goals, and/or on an Overview, Inventory, Screening, or Item practice/evaluation sheet); (2) providing whatever **instruction and demonstration** is necessary, (3) allowing the student to **directly practice** at or close to outcome goal levels; and (4) providing **incentives and consequences** which stimulate and maintain writing performance.

The smooth blend of these four teaching tactics represents a dramatically different teaching focus. It represents a "synthesis-developmental" emphasis versus an "analytical-remedial" emphasis.

Each skill or concept within a set is learned as a complete unit rather than as a collection of component parts. When adequate learning does not occur within the set of skills, the number of skills are reduced (sliced). This is in contrast to analyzing the component errors and developing remedial programs for these component errors.

Through direct practice, at appropriate instructional levels, students internalize rules, patterns, and concepts. They do not learn how to analyze skills and concepts or recount relationships and rules. If analytical knowledge ("the why") is deemed pertinent, this must be delayed until proficiency is achieved in "how to" perform the skill or concept.

Learning of all skills and concepts must occur in the same way speaking is learned. Children internalize spoken vocabulary and grammatical structures in small **slices** through **demonstration (modeling)**, with **direct practice** and with constant feedback **(incentives and consequences)**. Yet they are unable to articulate the component parts of speech (i.e., sounds and grammatical structures) or the speech rules and relationships.

These four teaching tactics are universal and applicable to all ages and all curriculum areas. How successful any writing program is will depend on how consistently the program employs these generic teaching tactics.

Classroom Organization

To implement the concepts presented thus far requires a great deal of classroom organization. Classroom organization is divided into the following four categories: (1) materials organization, (2) people organization, (3) time organization, and (4) space organization.

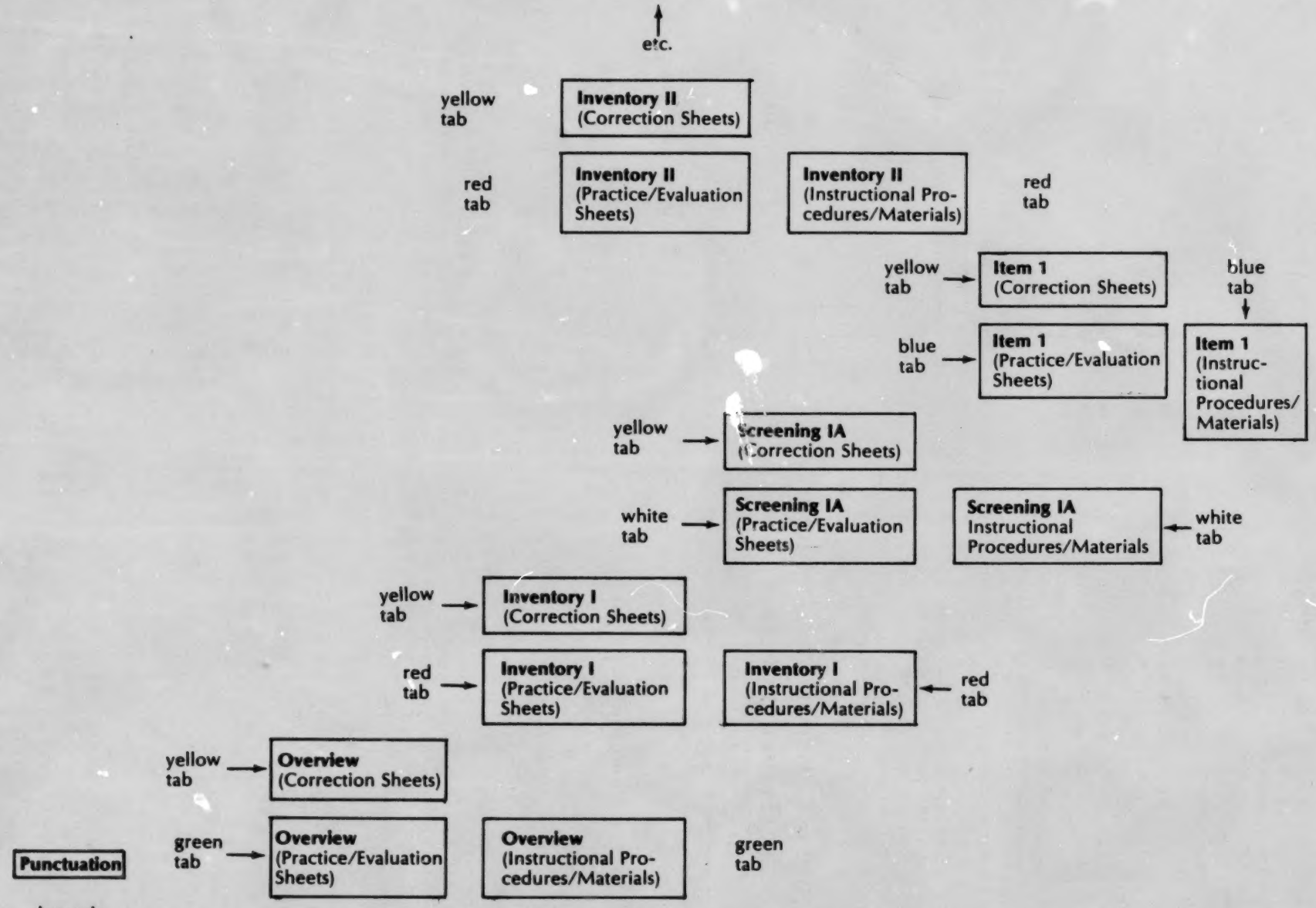
Material Organization

The curriculum ladders are extremely useful in organizing instructional and evaluational materials. The color codes suggested for the Overview (green), Inventory (red), Screening (white), Item (blue), and Correction sheets (yellow), are followed by using colored tabs available in hanging file folder systems.

Practice/evaluation sheets, various forms and exams, topics for prose writing, sheets describing various simulation activities, and listings of various instructional procedures and materials are filed under such a system.

Figure 5 (page 25) depicts how a file drawer looks using a tabbed hanging folder system. (This follows the punctuation ladder in Figure 1, page 13.)

Figure 5 Example of File Cabinet Drawer Organized by Curriculum Ladder Levels

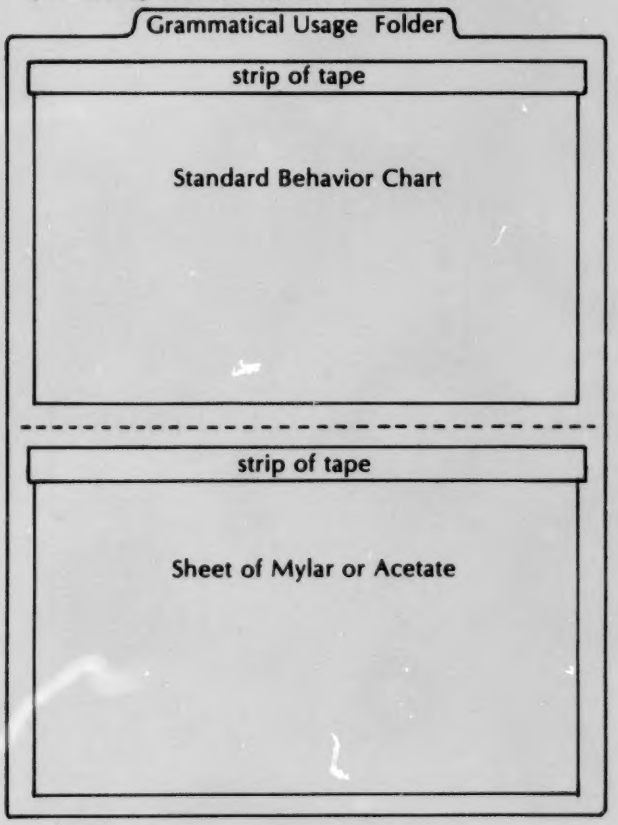


Keep a separate set of good photocopy originals for all materials in the files. Keep the master sets in a three-ring binder to protect them from becoming soiled, bent, or torn. The masters are used to make thermo-dittos and/or thermo-stencils to replenish the supply of consumable materials.

A file drawer for each different curriculum area (ladder) is an efficient organizational procedure. With "direct practice," students quickly learn to independently interact with the filing system. This saves much of the time invested in setting it up.

A practice/evaluation folder is useful for organizing practice/evaluation materials. The practice/evaluation folder is established for each writing skill. The folder involves a standard file folder (i.e., 9" x 11 3/4"), with a standard behavior chart (see Figure 4) taped at the top and a sheet of acetate or mylar taped on the bottom. Figure 6 shows an example of such a folder. The practice/evaluation sheet is placed under the mylar and a wax or water soluable pen is used to perform the activity. The student corrects his performance and represents the correct and erroneous information on the appropriate day of the standard chart.

Figure 6 Example of Classroom Practice/Evaluation Folder



People Organization

A helper support system increases options for providing individualized programs. The largest resource of helpers are the students in each classroom.

Students use the established filing system to pick up practice/evaluation materials, directions for simulation activities, and other instructional materials. After performing, with a practice/evaluation folder, the appropriate correction sheet is located and the work corrected.

Partner systems are valuable in activities requiring oral or "doing" responses. For example, partners can: dictate spelling words to each other and correct their work together, observe creative thinking activities and assess how well each fulfilled the stated objectives, etc.

A number of outside helpers are available (e.g., parents, other students in the building, senior citizens, volunteer groups). Outside helpers are used: to work instructionally with individuals or small groups, to do clerical activities, and/or to help in evaluation activities.

The following points must be remembered when using outside helpers.

1. Be specific in delineating the tasks.
2. Spend **enough time** in teaching the helpers. (Follow the generic teaching tactics in teaching helpers: slice, demonstrate, direct practice, and give positive feedback.)
3. Require a commitment to an exact schedule (e.g., 10:30-11:30 a.m., Monday, Wednesday, Friday). This enables accurate planning and scheduling.

Time Organization

Time organization involves developing classroom routines, rules and duties, and various organizational procedures to free us from routine time consuming tasks.

Previous comments regarding the organization and use of materials and people are certainly part of making efficient use of classroom time.

Listed below are a number of other ideas regarding efficient time management.

Routines

1. Have an assignment folder for each student which is picked up when entering the classroom. This folder explains the activities to perform during each time period.

   For Example:

Assignment Sheet for: Tyrone Date: 27/March/81

8:30-8:32	Timed Practice/Evaluation Activity
8:35-8:45	Practice on Punctuation Inventory II, Capitalization Screening III A
8:50-9:05	Small group instruction with teacher on use of to, too, two.
9:10-9:25	Practice spelling words with partner

2. Pickup and return assignment folders to the same location.

3. Have the buzzer (or preferably music) that begins the class be the signal to begin a timed activity. This consistently eliminates the "settling down" time and provides a quick way to take attendance while all students are working.

4. Use an auditory signal device (e.g., taped music is nice, a timer that rings after a set time) to schedule two or three activities per period in a secondary classroom or to schedule throughout a day in an elementary classroom.

5. Establish a standard location to turn in assignments. At this location have a different box or folder for different assignments (e.g., capitalization sheet box, grammatical usage sheet box, theme or story box).

6. Play a tape throughout a classroom period with signals at minute intervals. This provides an ongoing start and stop signal for minute practice activities. [The tape can run silently for a minute then signal the end of the minute (e.g., please stop) or music can play during each minute with signals inserted.]

7. These classroom routines must be "directly practiced" if they are to save time.

Rules and Duties

1. Establish rules and duties immediately at the beginning of the year.

2. Post rules and duties.

3. State rules in terms of appropriate behavior (e.g., "When you enter the room, pick up your assignment folder", "wait for the signal to change activities").

4. Duties (e.g., A-V operator, errand person, filing materials helper) are alternated between various class members on a daily or weekly basis.

Space Organization

Changing and organizing space to better accommodate individual differences is difficult to accomplish. It requires being in the same classroom all day and often the purchasing or making of additional tables, partitions, etc.

Learning can occur under any classroom organization. Partitioned areas, study cubicles, learning stations or centers, individual desks, and laboratory/simulation areas are more advantageous merely because they provide more options. With more options, individual needs are better accommodated.

Below are listed a number of space organization ideas which can be helpful.

1. Face the open side of cubicles toward a wall to facilitate student attentiveness and reduce distraction for other students.

2. The following points are useful when using learning centers.

   a. Identify each center by name and number (e.g., Station one - Spelling).
   b. Have directions listed at each center (e.g., see Figure 7).
   c. Partition off centers by using cardboard, pegboard, plywood, bulletin boards, bookcases, portable chalkboards, or file cabinets.
   d. If dividers are plain let students decorate them.
   e. A listening post and a tape recorder at each center provides flexibility.
   f. Distinguish between a "learning" center, where learning is expected to occur and an "activity" center.

3. A validation center is useful. This is a location to demonstrate proficiency. Validation centers are particularly useful for oral summaries.

Figure 7 Example of Directions for a Learning Center

Spelling Practice/Evaluation Station

(Directions)

1. Pick appropriate spelling tape.
2. Put name and date on spelling practice/evaluation sheet, circle level working on.
3. Place tape in cassette recorder.
4. Start recorder.
5. Perform.
6. Correct performance.
7. Chart performance.
8. Replace cassette tape.
9. If validation check, place corrected sheet in basket for teacher.

The remainder of the monograph looks at the eight basic writing subdivisions in an outline form. The concepts presented in the Overview section serve as a framework for the discussion in each subdivision.

As these concepts are re-encountered, periodically review the general discussion in the Overview section until you have internalized the concepts.

HANDWRITING

Handwriting[11] is the most important step in learning to write. This crucial first step sets the stage. If a child learns handwriting with ease, the writing process begins as a rewarding, nonfrustrating experience. Unfortunately, many of the problems identified by the Department of Education study are rooted in our present handwriting practices.

The writing process can start off rewarding by following this basic principle: **make up handwriting lessons with words which students can read proficiently.**

This principle delays the introduction of letter and word handwriting instruction for as long as a year, while beginning reading proficiency is achieved. During this time, practice setting skills (e.g., body, paper, arm, and pencil grip positions) and practice a variety of prealphabetic fine motor skills requiring use of these setting

Pinpointing

General Outcome Goal: Our students will be able to accurately (legibly) and fluently write script numerals and words in performing day-to-day writing activities (i.e., the 17 outcome goals).

A number of stated or assumed components make up this general outcome goal. These components are identified and discussed below.

(1) **Accuracy and fluency**

As mentioned in the proficiency overview section, accuracy and fluency are equally important. Handwriting **accuracy**-legibility (not perfection) is a social courtesy to anyone, including ourselves, who reads our handwriting. Handwriting **fluency** enables handwriting to be efficient and not overly tedious.

The over-emphasis on handwriting accuracy has lost sight of this balance. We have confused handwriting as a means of efficient **informal** communication with handwriting as graphic art. Graphic art (e.g., italic, Gothic) is certainly a relevant and pleasing enterprise. However, this emphasis belongs in art class not as part of developmental handwriting instruction.

(2) **Script writing versus printing**

Teaching printing and then script writing is based on two assumptions: (1) printed letters are assumed to be easier to form and (2) since reading material is printed, it is assumed printed handwriting will be less confusing.

Optimum performance fluency (with equivalent accuracy) is 15%-20% greater with the motion and flow of script writing versus printing.[12] This refutes the first assumption.

The Montessori schools provide a long history of starting young children in script writing while simultaneously using printed reading material (Montessori, 1964).

The "printing script process" teaches one complete system of handwriting and then turns the world upside down by introducing:

a) 52 new symbols (26 small letters, 26 large letters)
b) new position of paper
c) new slant of letters
d) new spacing
e) new movement flow
f) new rate of speed

(from Palmer method, 1976)

The hybrids between printing and script (e.g., italic, modified script systems, slanted print) do not represent a solution. They continue the overemphasis on accuracy—handwriting as graphic art.

Handwriting must begin where we plan to end up — with script writing — the system which uses: "connected looped letters" to facilitate the accurate, fluid, and constant flow of handwriting.

(3) **Unruled or standard-ruled paper (3/8 inch) versus ½ inch to 2 inch lined paper.**

The outcome goal for handwriting involves writing on unruled or standard-ruled paper. Evans and Blackburn (1973) report that 25 of 28 beginning first grades functioned as well on ¼ inched lined paper as on ½ inch lined paper. Again, let's start where we plan to end up.

(4) **Letter size appropriate for standard-ruled paper versus ½ inch to 2 inch sized letters for wider ruled paper.**

This is directly related to number 3 above. The handwriting outcome goal is to use smaller sized upper and lower case letters which fit within standard ruled paper.

[11]"Handwriting" is used instead of "penmanship" because it is more descriptive (and nonsexist). The use of **standard** and **descriptive** terminology is essential for clear and efficient communication to ourselves, our students, and the public.

[12]Verify this by having a person proficient in Palmer method script writing copy the same passage for one minute in script and in printing. Compare the fluency (total letters written/minute) and the accuracy (number of legible versus illegible letters).

(5) **Standard-sized pencils (7/8" circumference) versus primary sized pencils (1 3/4" circumference).**

I have never understood the logic of providing the largest pencils for the smallest hands.

In fact, children's performance is not improved by use of a larger pencil (Evans and Blackburn, 1973).

To become a proficient script writer, the handwriting skills listed on Figure 8 (page 30) must be mastered. The letters are arranged from least complex (i.e., fewest strokes per letter) to most complex (i.e., most strokes per letter). This "may" be an appropriate sequence of introduction for many students. However, the reading material and each student's performance must dictate the appropriate sequence. For example, a pupil who can already write her name can begin with these letters.

Proficiency

Figure 9 (page 32) presents the proficiency standard for handwriting. The handwriting standards presented in Figure 2 are duplicated under Section IV - "In-Context Writing Skills." The other standards cover setting conditions and beginning handwriting skills.

The following factors influence student performance within the performance ranges indicated.

1. Letters with more strokes take slightly longer to write (e.g., - two strokes, - four strokes). In isolated practice, during a standard time period, a few more "lower stroke letters" can be written than "higher stroke letters".

2. Tracing is slower than copying. Copying is slower than hear-write and think-write activities.

3. Letters written-per-minute are consistently higher within words and sentences than when written as isolated letters.

4. Letters-per-minute performance on a practice/evaluation sheet may be higher or lower compared with outcome goal performances.

Theoretically, different proficiency standards could be set for these four conditions. Pragmatically, this is unnecessary detail. Practiced judgement creates appropriate adjustment to these conditions within the proficiency ranges.

Achieving proficiency standards for each skill establishes handwriting as an automatic process. Failure to accomplish this automatic level increases frustration and slows down, or preempts, the achievement of handwriting proficiency.

Evaluation Procedures and Materials

Whether writing paragraphs, sentences, single words, or connected single letters; or tracing, copying, or free writing; the handwriting evaluation focus is the same — **the number of script letters written correctly per minute and incorrectly per minute.**

Samples of different practice/evaluation sheets are presented in Figure 10 (page 34). These sheets follow the standard practice/evaluation format outlined in Figure 3 and the handwriting Curriculum Ladder in Figure 8.[13]

These sheets follow the standard practice/evaluation format outlined in Figure 3 and the handwriting Curriculum Ladder in Figure 8.[13]

The paragraphs, sentences, and words are taken from previously mastered reading material. They are copied in script onto a practice/evaluation sheet.[14]

Correcting

The two categories of accuracy information are: "Letters written correctly (legibly)" — formed, sized, slanted, and spaced correctly.[15] "Letters written incorrectly (illegibly)" — inaccurately formed, sized, slanted, and/or spaced.

Below are listed the correction criteria for the categories of letter formation, size, slant, and spacing:

Formation

- connecting strokes correct
- letters closed (e.g., *o, a, f, j*) correctly
- small *i* and *j* dotted correctly
- small *t* and *x* crossed correctly
- each stroke of letter connected and completed correctly
- letters *f, g, j, p, q, y* and *z* all descend

Size

- maximum size letters are all the upper case letters and the "tall" lower case letters (i.e., *b, f, h, k, l*)
- intermediate sized letters are: *d, p, t*

(Cont. on page 33)

[13]Note the relationship between the Curriculum Ladder and the practice/evaluation sheets. The Item level relates to single connected letters, the Screening level to connected letters and words, the Inventory level to phrases and sentences and the Overview level to paragraphs.

[14]If a student can transcribe from printed material to script writing, practice/evaluation sheets are unnecessary. If basal reader publishers printed beginning reading materials in script, copying could be done directly from the books. This would eliminate the need for most practice/evaluation sheets.

[15]"Proportion", "alignment" and "line quality" are three other categories commonly included in handwriting accuracy criteria. Proportion and alignment are accounted for in the letter size definition. Line quality (i.e., clarity of strokes due to pencil pressure) problems are eliminated by learning correct body, paper, arm, and pencil grip positions.

Figure 8 Curriculum Ladder for Handwriting

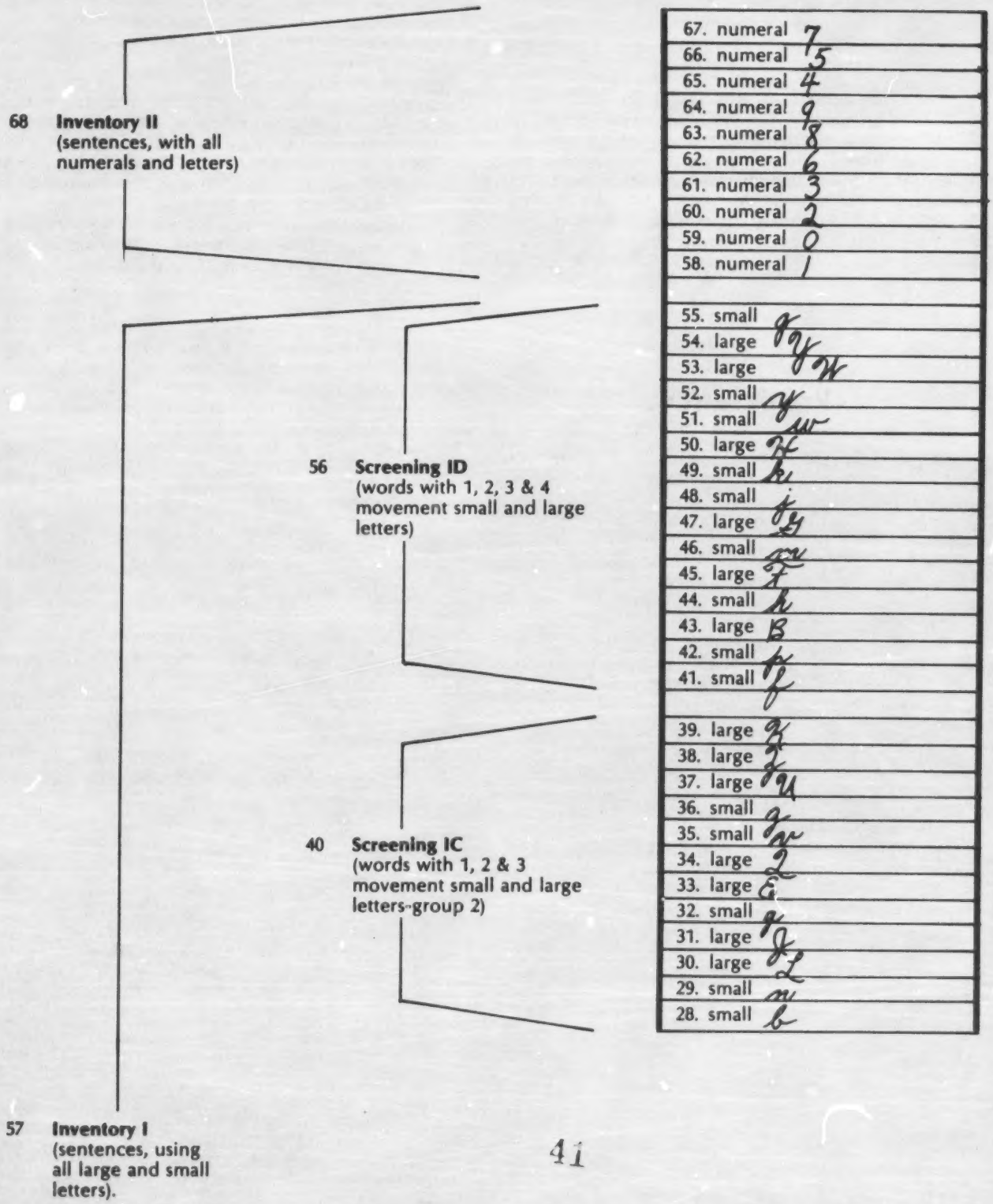


Figure 8 Curriculum Ladder for Handwriting (Cont.)

27 **Screening IB**
(words with 1, 2, & 3 movement small and large letters-group 1)

13 **Screening IA**
(words with 1 and 2 movement small and large letters)

26. large K
25. small s
24. large P
23. small t
22. large J
21. large M
20. small w
19. large T
18. large R
17. small s
16. small i
15. large D
12. small x
11. large V
10. small d
9. large O
8. large C
7. small l
6. large N
5. small a
4. small o
3. small e
2. large A
1. small c

Item:

Our students will be able to accurately and fluently write script numerals and words using:

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Figure 9 Handwriting Proficiency Standards

I. Setting Condition Skills	Correct Range/ Minute*	II. Pre-Alphabetic Writing Skills	Correct Range/ Minute*	III. Isolated Alphabet Writing Skills	Correct Range/ Minute*	IV. In-Context Writing Skills	Correct Range/ Minute*
1. position body correctly (stand by desk, sit down in chair, and position body)	5-10	1. write "push-pulls" (WWW)	300-500	1. write single connected letters (e.g., *llllllll*)	100-200	1. write **letters** in words	100-200
2. position paper correctly	20-40	2. write slanted line (/)	200-400	2. write two different connected letters (e.g., small - *oaoaoa* large & small - *CoCoCoCo*)	100-200	2. write **letters** in sentences and paragraphs	100-200
3. pick up pencil in position for writing correctly	40-60	3. write right curve ( ))	100-200			3. write **words** in prose writing	20-40 (& 99% correct)
4. pick up pencil (with nonpreferred hand), place on writing hand, grip with index finger correctly	20-40	4. write left curve (( )	100-200				
5. position arm correctly	15-25	5. write under curve (◡)	100-200		100-200		
		6. write over curve (◠)	100-200	3. write numerals			
		7. write ovals (*OOOO*)	100-200				

*Only correct performance ranges are indicated since regardless of the skill the incorrect range is usually two or fewer.

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- minimum letters are lower case: a, c, e, g, i, j, m, n, o, q, r, s, u, v, w, x, and y.
- letters need to stay within the lines of standard-ruled paper but it is not necessary to touch the lines.

Slant

- a 60 (e.g., /) slant enables handwriting to flow most smoothly. Each word in a sentence slants in the same direction. (Note: Slant is not a problem when correct body, paper, arm, and pencil grip positions have been learned.)

Spacing

- between letters — enough space for the oval part of the numeral "9"
- between words — enough space for lower case "o"
- between sentences — enough space for two lower case "oo"

Familiarity with these correction criteria is important. They do not need to be memorized. Nor are correction templates or transparencies necessary.

The judgement of eyeballs, **practiced** in handwriting correction, is sufficient for evaluating the legibility of informal communication.

Follow the "Steps in Conducting an Evaluation Sample" outlined in the Overview section for each handwriting evaluation.

Instructional Placement

Instructional placement decision-making begins by checking at the Overview level (i.e., paragraph level). Only move to lower levels (e.g., sentences, phrases, words) when learning is insufficient at higher levels.

Strive to maintain placement at the word level. (This is feasible when reading proficiency has been achieved.) Working at the word level enables practice of script connecting strokes, and within word: size, spacing, and slant.

An exact instructional placement frequency range is difficult to establish. It varies with different pupils. Correct performance must be significantly below 100-200 letters correct/minute **and/or** incorrect performance significantly above 2 letters incorrect/minute for **learning** to occur.

As a "rough" guideline consider performance on a slice of curriculum instructional within the following range:

30-60 letters correct/minute

AND/OR

5-20 letters incorrect/minute

The "AND/OR" indication means a level is instructional when fluency (total responses) needs increasing **OR** incorrect performance needs reducing **OR** both.

Generic Teaching Tactics

Begin handwriting instruction at or close to the outcome goals. Student performance and learning information indicates how far to slice back to find an instructional placement level.

Slicing

The possible handwriting curriculum placement slices are listed below:

	Curriculum Ladder Level
seventeen outcome goals	
write a paragraph	Overview
write a complex sentence	Inventory
write a simple sentence	
write a phrase	
write a 5 or 6 letter word (e.g., first name, proper nouns)	Screening
write a 3 or 4 letter word (e.g., first name, proper nouns)	
write two letter words or two letter combinations (e.g., it, oa, Co)	
write 3 or 4 stroke connected letters (e.g., ffff)	Item
write 1 or 2 stroke connected letters (e.g., eeeeee)	
write ovals (e.g., OOOOO)	Pre-Alphabetic Skills
write: right curve (e.g.,)), left curve (e.g., ( ), under curve (e.g., ∪), over curve (e.g. ∩)	
write slanted lines (e.g., /)	
write "push-pulls" (e.g., mmm)	

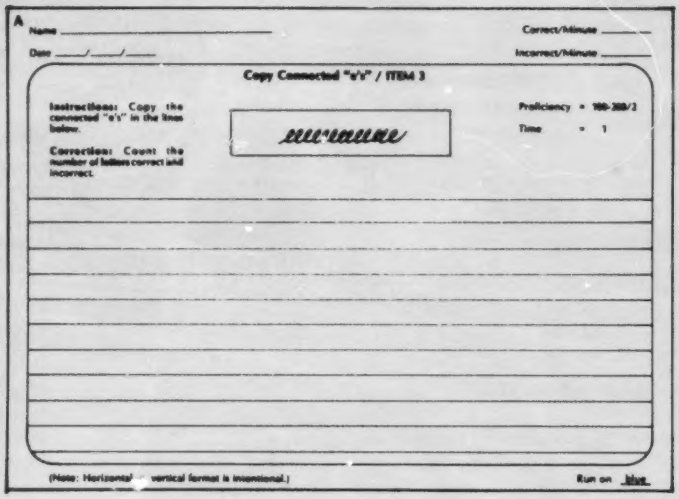
When instruction must begin below the word level, slice to connected letters or the prealphabetic skills. Avoid concentrating on "correlated" skills (e.g., similarity-differences exercises, Harmon circles, finger painting, sandpaper letters).

Failure to learn at the lowest prealphabetic skill level (e.g., "push-pulls") indicates a need for basic motor training. This may require services of a physical and/or occupational therapist.

Instruction - Demonstration

The first step in handwriting instruction-demonstration is to teach correct body, paper, arm, and

Figure 10 Samples of Handwriting Practice/Evaluation Sheets


A

Name _____ Correct/Minute _____

Date ___/___/___ Incorrect/Minute _____

Copy Connected "e's" / ITEM 3

Instructions: Copy the connected "e's" in the lines below.

Corrections: Count the number of letters correct and incorrect.

eeeeeeeee

Proficiency = 100-200/2

Time = 1

(Note: Horizontal vs. vertical format is intentional.) Run on blue

B

Name _____ Correct/Minute _____

Date ___/___/___ Incorrect/Minute _____

Copy Words/Screening III

Instructions: Copy the words on the lines below.

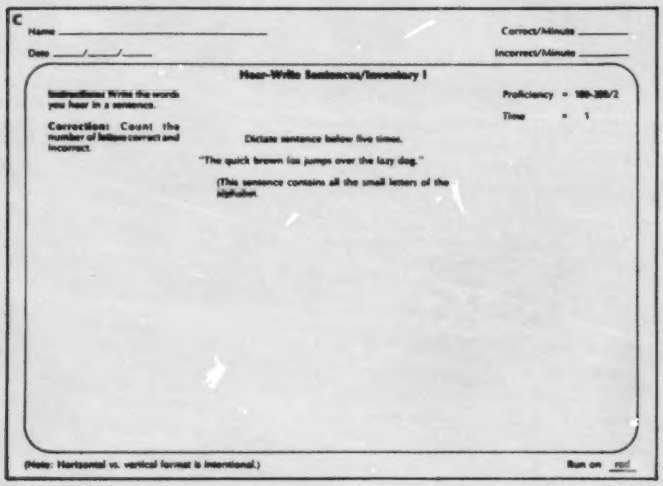
Corrections: Count the number of letters correct and incorrect.

Proficiency = 100-200/2

Time = 1

it Pat sll Violet recess cloud
case loss to decide cloud sat
at tea coat Scott tail lid
as rice dear card ax Dad
cat loud deal a too Ned
I red desd record air coal
rate class loose score cart

(Note: Horizontal vs. vertical format is intentional.) Run on white


C

Name _____ Correct/Minute _____

Date ___/___/___ Incorrect/Minute _____

Hear-Write Sentences/Inventory I

Instructions: Write the words you hear in a sentence.

Corrections: Count the number of letters correct and incorrect.

Proficiency = 100-200/2

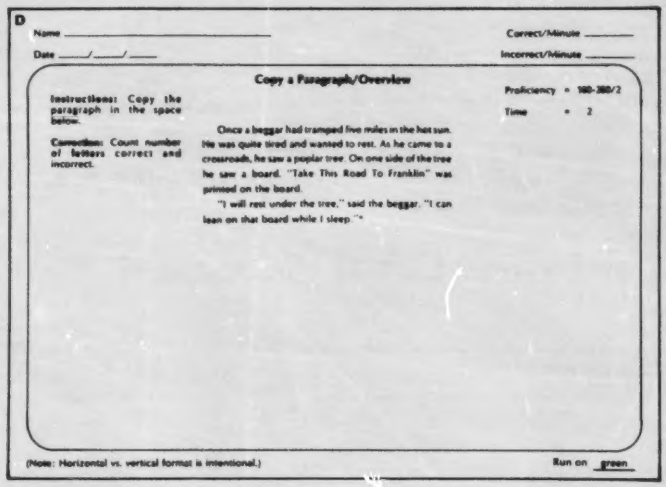
Time = 1

Dictate sentence below five times.

"The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog."

(This sentence contains all the small letters of the alphabet.

(Note: Horizontal vs. vertical format is intentional.) Run on red


D

Name _____ Correct/Minute _____

Date ___/___/___ Incorrect/Minute _____

Copy a Paragraph/Overview

Instructions: Copy the paragraph in the space below.

Corrections: Count number of letters correct and incorrect.

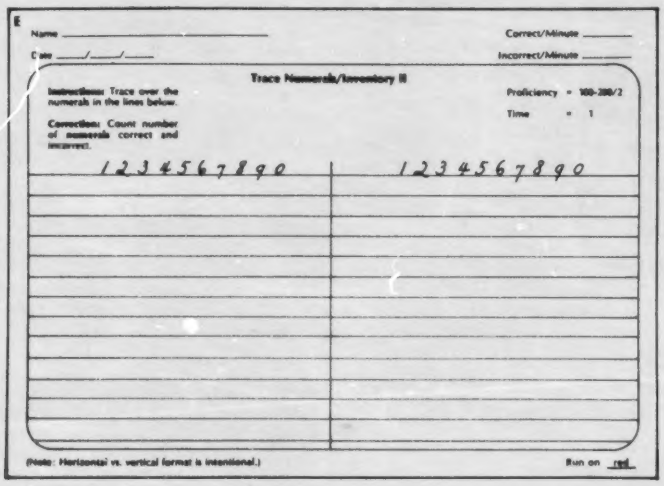
Proficiency = 100-200/2

Time = 2

Once a beggar had tramped five miles in the hot sun. He was quite tired and wanted to rest. As he came to a crossroads, he saw a poplar tree. On one side of the tree he saw a board. "Take This Road To Franklin" was printed on the board.

"I will rest under the tree," said the beggar. "I can lean on that board while I sleep."

(Note: Horizontal vs. vertical format is intentional.) Run on green


E

Name _____ Correct/Minute _____

Date ___/___/___ Incorrect/Minute _____

Trace Numerals/Inventory II

Instructions: Trace over the numerals in the lines below.

Corrections: Count number of numerals correct and incorrect.

Proficiency = 100-200/2

Time = 1

1234567890 1234567890

(Note: Horizontal vs. vertical format is intentional.) Run on red

*From Lippincott's Basic Reading (Book C) New York; J. B. Lippincott, 1969.

pencil grip positions.[16]

The Palmer Method (1976) outlines the following rules.

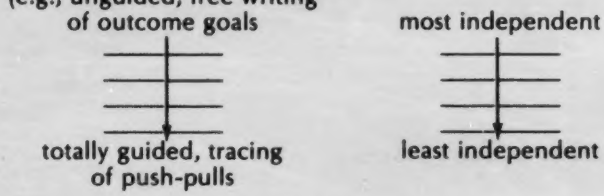
- Sit comfortably with feet flat, back straight, and head up.
- Place the writing paper with the lower left-hand corner pointing to the center of body, if right-handed.
- Turn the writing paper so the lower right-hand corner is pointing to the center of body, if left-handed.[17]
- Hold a well-sharpened pencil with thumb, first and second fingers, with only the index finger on top of the pencil, resting the pencil lightly on the side of the second finger (this is good pencil position).[18]
- Let the hand glide freely across the page moving on the last two fingers.
- Strive for muscular relaxation at the start of each writing period (1) take position at desk with arms hanging limply at sides. Shake hands vigorously. Allowing them to go limp again, (2) raise hands in air a few inches above the desk top and let them hang limply. (3) Drop hands into position. (4) Take up pencil and assume correct writing position. You may want your pupils to repeat this muscle relaxation exercise at intervals as they proceed through their written work.

There are gradations of student independence in handwriting. Below are listed the two basic gradation segments:

(1)
think-write (free)
↓
hear-write (teacher, helper, or taped dictation)
↓
copying
↓
tracing

(2)
unguided practice
↓
partially guided practice (e.g., holding wrist or arm)
↓
totally guided practice (e.g., holding entire hand and fingers)

Matching the above information with the slicing information on page creates a three-variable continium:



Direct Practice

Demonstrate a simple model, at an appropriate slice of curriculum, then **direct practice**.

Samples of various practice/evaluation sheets are presented in Figure 10. These sheets are made up from reading materials and are written in the script form to be learned (preferably Palmer Method).

Remember to practice under the following conditions:

1. a standard-sized pencil
2. standard-ruled paper
3. at student's desk (or most frequent place of writing)
4. with correct body, paper, arm, and pencil grip positions.
5. as close to the "think-write, outcome-goal levels" as possible.
6. in script

A few practice pointers are listed below.

1. Keep guided practice, tracing, and copying close to the proficiency standards.
2. After guiding, tracing, or copying levels are no longer necessary, use **dictation** of connected letters, words, sentences, or paragraphs for handwriting practice.
3. Integrate the 17 outcome goals into practice sessions, when possible.
4. Writing is first of all kinesthetic. Encourage students to "think about" how it feels to write various words — "does it feel right?" (particularly after words can be written proficiently).

[16]These skills are practiced while establishing beginning reading proficiency. This enables most pupils to begin at the "writing word level" when alphabetic handwriting instruction begins.

[17]When pupils are undecided about handedness let them write with each hand. Compare the letters written correctly and incorrectly/minute. Use this information to make the decision regarding hand preferance.

[18]The least expensive, simple, yet effective pencil gripping aid I have found is a triangular pencil grip. The gripper is triangular shaped, 1 3/4 inches long, and made of polyurethane. A hole in the middle enables it to fit over any standard sized pencil.

Triangular Shape Prevents Rolling

5. The self-evaluation or proofreading process is visual. Encourage students to self-evaluate words visually — "does it look right?".

6. Pick words from reading material that teach specific concepts (e.g., words beginning with upper case letters, "O" and "A" words, "i" and "L" words, "w" and "v" words — words with different connecting strokes).

7. Do not practice upper case letters in isolation. Always practice upper case letters with a lower case letter to provide a comparative size model.

8. Plan for at least 30 minutes of practice per day until handwriting proficiency is achieved on "hear-write (dictating) a paragraph".

Incentives and Consequences

1. There are some materials specific to the handwriting area which may serve as both incentives and consequences [e.g., Zaner-Bloser (1981) handwriting certificates]

2. Circle letters that are written particulary well to serve as positive models.

3. Give positive feedback regarding progress at all levels of handwriting instruction — from body position to writing paragraphs.

When letters are incorrect (i.e., in terms of formation, size, slant, and/or spacing); rather than going through an elaborate error analysis and remedial program, merely redemonstrate the correct form, size, slant, and/or spacing — with guidance if necessary, directly practice and provide feedback. If no improvement occurs; slice, demonstrate, direct practice, and provide feedback. . . .

* * * * *

Starting reading instruction in preschool or kindergarten, where it belongs, enables pupils to achieve beginning reading proficiency by early first grade. Alphabetic handwriting instruction can begin at this time.

By integrating and systematically using the generic teaching tactics,[19] 98 percent of the students can be **proficient** script writers within two years (i.e., by the beginning of third grade).

[19]Following the teaching tactics largely eliminates the need for published handwriting materials.

SPELLING

Formal spelling instruction must wait until handwriting proficiency has been achieved at the "hear-write (dictation), **word** level".

Working at or above the "hear-write word level" in handwriting means spelling is practiced at the same time. Reading practice has also provided exposure to correct spelling patterns. Consequently, when formal spelling instruction begins, students are able to read, write, **and** spell many of the words.

Pinpointing

General Outcome Goal: Our students will be able to accurately and fluently spell 10,000-60,000 words in performing day-to-day writing activities (i.e., the 17 outcome goals).

Figure 11 (page 38) presents the Curriculum Ladder for spelling. The ladder is a listing of spelling units. The 109 Item units on the ladder encompass the 4,000 most frequently written words. These 4,000 words account for 98 percent of all words anyone ever writes (Horn, 1926; Horn, 1960).

By assigning 20-40 words to each Item level, the 4,000 words are covered by the 109 spelling units. There is not a **standard** set of words for each unit since the reading materials in use dictate the sequence of word introduction.

After mastery of these 4,000 words, spelling units are developed from the subjects under study (e.g., music, art, literature, social studies, science).

Proficiency

Spelling proficiency, as indicated on Figure 2, is:

1. 100-200 letters spelled-in-place correctly
   AND
   2 or fewer letters spelled-in-place incorrectly
2. 20-40 words/minute
   AND
   99% correct
   (in **prose writing**)

The first criteria relates to concentration on spelling as the evaluative focus. The second criteria relates to the standard fluency range in prose writing. A proficient prose writer writes 20-40 words per minute and 99 percent of these words are spelled correctly.

The concept of "letters-in-place" emphasizes that each letter in a word occupies a specific place (e.g., /h/a/s/t/e/). When letters are omitted from their place or substituted, or when additional letters are added, these are incorrect letters-in-place.

Counting letters, instead of words, is analogous to giving credit for correct math computations even when the answer is incorrect.

Counting letters also provides a more sensitive index of improvement. For example, assume "interpretation" is a new word to learn. The first attempt at spelling it looks like this: "intreprasion" (8 letters-in-place correct, 6 letters-in-place incorrect). After a few days of direct practice the word is spelled like this "interpertation" (12 letters-in-place correct, 2 letters-in-place incorrect). If "interpretation" is corrected as a whole and counted wrong each time, significant improvement is masked.

Evaluation Procedures and Materials

The evaluation focus for spelling is: **the number of letters spelled-in-place correctly per minute and incorrectly per minute**.

The evaluation format for the Item through the Overview level is hear-write[20] passages dictated from reading material. Since the reading materials are followed in developing the spelling units there is no **standard** set of materials.

Below are listed the recommended steps in developing the spelling units.

1. Pick from 20-40 words for each of the 109 Item units.
2. Identify, pages in reading material which initially introduce these 20-40 words.
3. Record passages from these pages on audio-tapes for each Curriculum Ladder level.[21]
4. Select passages which include the highest density of new words.
5. Read the passages on to the tape at a proficient oral reading fluency (i.e., 150-250 words per minute) with a distinct pause (e.g., 1 second) between each sentence.
6. Use the reverse side of the tape for a different passage which focuses on the same new words (i.e., form B).

The Screening, Inventory, and Overview levels encompass more words per level than the 20-40 words at the Item level. These levels require longer sample times.

Some students require a smaller slice of curriculum than the Item level (i.e., a Sub-Item level). One-minute samples are suggested for the Sub-Item levels.

---

[20]Ideally spelling evaluation occurs at the "think-write" level. However, it is often premature to require independent composition of sentences and paragraphs. Certainly, encourage practice at the "think-write" level.

[21]The spelling ladder in Figure 11 would involve: 109 Item level tapes, 22 Screening level tapes, 5 Inventory tapes, and 1 Overview level tape. The ladder represents approximately a three-year span. Consequently, 30-40 tapes are used across three different grades (e.g., 2nd, 3rd, and 4th). (When tapes are not available, use helpers for dictation and correcting.)

Figure 11 Curriculum Ladder for Spelling

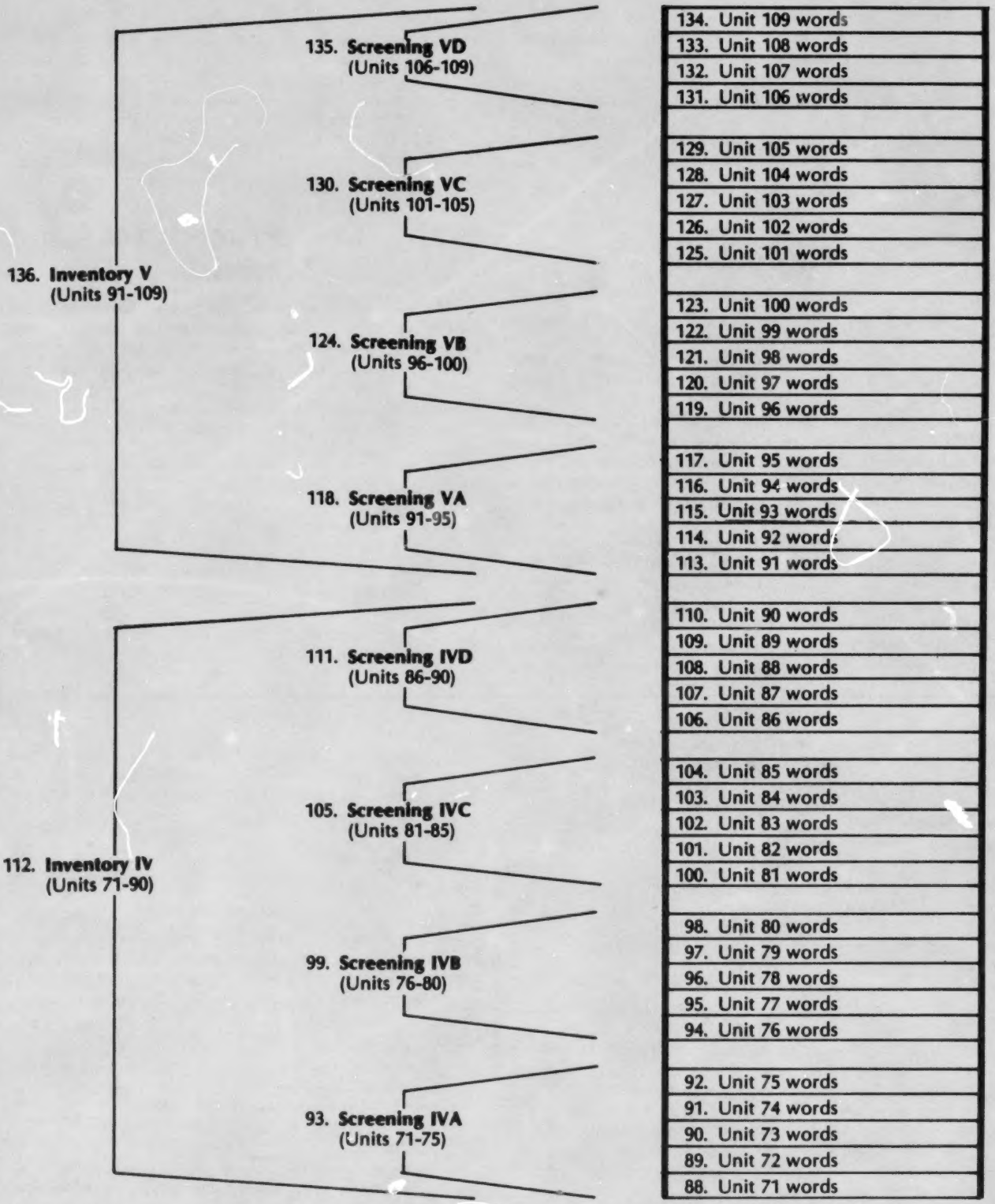


Figure 11 Curriculum Ladder for Spelling (Cont.)

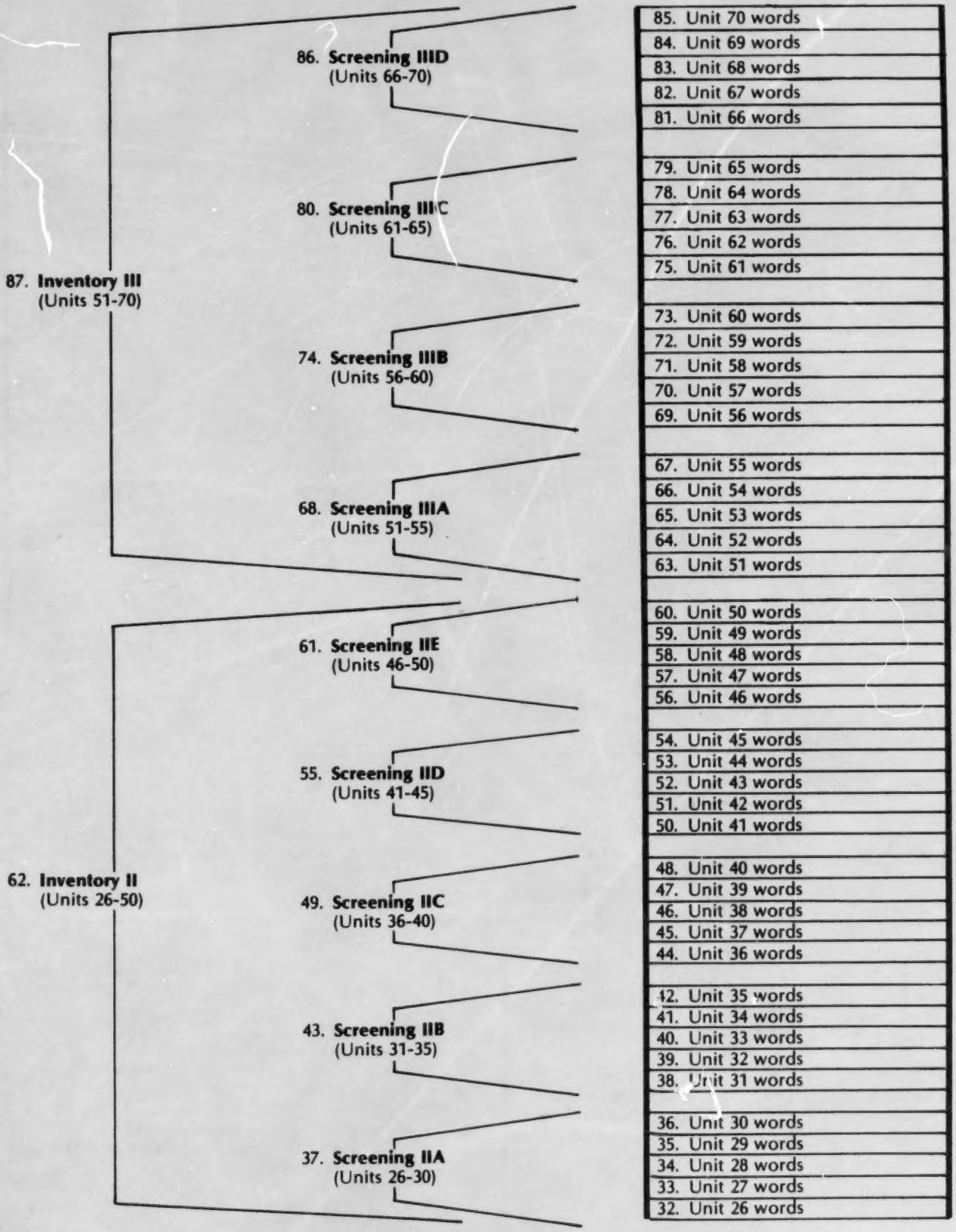
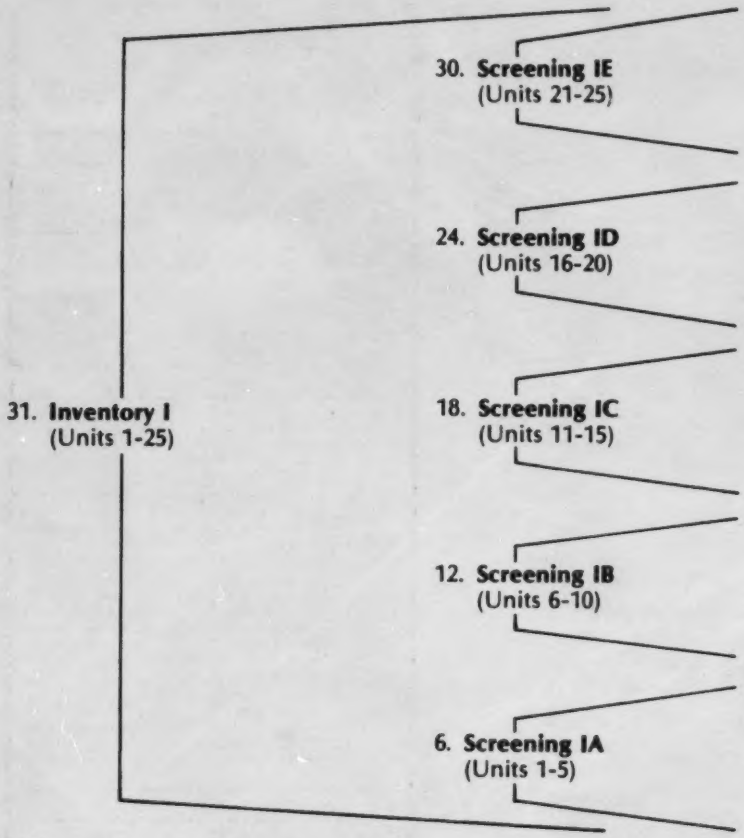


Figure 11 Curriculum Ladder for Spelling (Cont.)



29. Unit 25 words
28. Unit 24 words
27. Unit 23 words
26. Unit 22 words
25. Unit 21 words
23. Unit 20 words
22. Unit 19 words
21. Unit 18 words
20. Unit 17 words
19. Unit 16 words
17. Unit 15 words
16. Unit 14 words
15. Unit 13 words
14. Unit 12 words
13. Unit 11 words
11. Unit 10 words
10. Unit 9 words
9. Unit 8 words
8. Unit 7 words
7. Unit 6 words
5. Unit 5 words
4. Unit 4 words
3. Unit 3 words
2. Unit 2 words
1. Unit 1 words

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Item:

Our students will be able to accurately and fluently spell in-context:

A summary of the recommended sample times for each level is listed below:

Level	Sample Time	Approximate No. of Words Read at 150/min.	Approximate No. of Words Proficient Speller Can Spell
Overview	10 minutes	1,500	500
Inventory	10 minutes	1,500	500
Screening	5 minutes	750	250
Item	2 minutes	300	100
Sub-Item	1 minute	150	50

(NOTE: When a sample time is longer than one minute, remember to divide the correct and error letter counts by the sample time to get "per minute" information.)

The spelling dictation process used here is called "free dictation spelling". As a passage is read (live or on tape), pupils write as many words as possible. They are not able to write all the words, even when proficient. Initially, this dictation process is unfamiliar. With a brief explanation and some practice timings, students adjust rapidly and find the process an enjoyable challenge.

Traditionally, we pace spelling dictation, often slowing the pace down to the slowest performer in a group. The "free dictation" process frees all students to perform at their **optimum**, on the slice of curriculum appropriate to their present level of development.

Figure 12 represents the standard practice/evaluation sheet [22] used for spelling.

[22]For longer dictation samples (i.e., Screening, Inventory, Overview Levels) have available additional practice/evaluation sheets.

Figure 12 Standard Practice/Evaluation Sheet for Spelling

Name _____ Correct/Minute _____

Date _____/_____/_____ Incorrect/Minute _____

Instructions: Spell quickly the words you hear. Do not worry about words you miss.

Correction: Count letters spelled-in-place correctly and incorrectly.

Spelling Letters-in-Place

Level: Inventory, Screening
(circle) Item or Sub-Item

Indicate level no. _____

Tape side: A or B

Proficiency = 100-200/2

Time = 1, 2, 5, or 10

1. _____	15. _____
2. _____	16. _____
3. _____	17. _____
4. _____	18. _____
5. _____	19. _____
6. _____	20. _____
7. _____	21. _____
8. _____	22. _____
9. _____	23. _____
10. _____	24. _____
11. _____	25. _____
12. _____	26. _____
13. _____	27. _____
14. _____	28. _____

Correcting:

Different types of spelling errors are listed below with the appropriate correct and incorrect letter counts for each example.

			Count	
Problem	Correct Word	Incorrect Performance	Correct	Incorrect
- addition*	than	thang	4	1
- substitution	miscellaneous	mescellaneois	11	2
- omission	farther	fa_ther	6	1

*With additions it is possible to have more total letters (correct and incorrect) than are in the word.

The above examples standardize the correcting and counting of correct and incorrect letters. They are not intended to suggest an analytical — remedial focus.

Correction sheets are made by listing in order all the sentences read from a passage. All new words are underlined. A letter count is indicated above each word and a total letter count per sentence is given at the end of each sentence.

Figure 13 presents an example of a correction sheet.

Entire words or sentences which are correct are circled. Circle the correct letters and leave the incorrect letters unmarked in words which are misspelled. The number of correct and incorrect letters is counted up from this information.

Remember to recheck the "Steps in Conducting an Evaluation Sample" outlined in the Overview section.

Instructional Placement

Begin instructional placement decision-making by checking at the Overview (paragraph) level. Do not slice back to an instructional placement level lower than two-word simple sentence level (e.g., I am.)

The instructional placement "guidelines" for spelling are the same as for handwriting since the evaluation focus (i.e., letters) and the proficiency range (i.e., 100-200 letters per minute) are the same.

30-60 letters-in-place correct/minute

AND/OR

5-20 letters-in-place incorrect/minute

Generic Teaching Tactics

Spelling, like handwriting, is visual. The basic focus is "sight spelling" — learning to visualize each word as a unit, not as a combination of auditory sounds and rules.[23] The emphasis is on **word usage**, not word study.

Slicing

The possible spelling curriculum placement slices are listed below:

Seventeen Outcome Goals

↓

Overview Level (passages from newspaper)

↓

Inventory (passages from reading material encompassing many Item units)

↓

Screening (passages from reading material encompassing a few Item units)

↓

Item (passages encompassing 20-40 new words)

↓

Sub-Item (passages or sentences encompassing from 1 to 20 new words)

↓

handwriting proficiency

↓

reading proficiency

} prerequisites

The Sub-Item level involves taking a portion of the sentences (e.g., sometimes as few as one) from the Item level passages and repeating these sentences during a one-minute sample.

Instruction - Demonstration

1. When a student doesn't know how to spell a word, he should ask someone and then practice using it.
2. Initially encourage using the dictionary for pronunciation and meaning, not for spelling. "How can a word be found in the dictionary if we don't know how to spell it?"
3. Teach spelling rules through reading practice rather than by stating rules and analyzing words (e.g., more than one **monkey** is two or more **monkeys**, more than one **radish** is two or more **radishes**).

Direct Practice

1. Use the standard practice/evaluation sheet shown in Figure 12 for practice sessions.
2. Concentrate on written spelling versus oral spelling. (We eliminate the kinesthetic memory component in oral spelling.)
3. Use the tape recorder for both independent practice and self-evaluation.

[23]How mental or oral spelling is checked is a good example. We write the word down to "see if it looks right".

Figure 13 Example of Spelling Correction Sheet

Name _____ Correct/Minute _____

Date ____/____/____ Incorrect/Minute _____

Spelling Letters-in-Place

Instructions: Spell quickly the words you hear. Do not worry about words you miss.

Correction: Count letters spelled-in-place correctly and incorrectly.

Level: (Inventory) Screening
(circle) Item or Sub-Item

Indicate level no. _____

Tape side: (A) or B

Proficiency = 100-200/2

Time = 1, (2), 5, or 10

1. A **Thinking Beggar***	15	15. "Now, will you **think**?"	15
2. Once a **beggar** had **tramped** five miles in the sun.	38	16. "Indeed, I will, sir," said the **beggar**.	27
3. He was quite tired and wanted to rest.	30	17. "Take that **road** to **Franklin**."	22
4. As he came to a **crossroads**, he saw a poplar tree.	37	18. Then a **tailor** stopped to ask the **beggar** which **road** to take to **Franklin**.	57
5. On one side of the tree he saw a **board**.	29	19. "It is **worth** a **dollar**," said the **beggar**, "for me to start **thinking**."	49
6. "Take This **Road** To **Franklin**" was printed on the **board**.	42	20. The **tailor** gave him a **dollar**.	23
7. "I will rest under the tree," said the **beggar**.	34	21. "Turn to the left," the **beggar** said.	26
8. "I can lean on the **board** while I **sleep**."	30	22. The **beggar** went back to **sleep**.	20
9. As the **beggar slept**, a **doctor rode** up to him.	34	23. Before long a **sailor** was **shaking** him.	30
10. "Wake up, **beggar**," said the **doctor**.	25	24. "Which is the **road** to **Franklin**?" he asked.	31
11. "Can you tell me which **road** to take to **Franklin**?"	37	25. The **beggar** got another **dollar**, and the **sailor** went down the **road**.	52
12. "It is too hot to **think**," said the **beggar**."	30	26. "A **doctor** gets paid when he **doctors**," said the **beggar** to himself.	50
13. "**Thinking** is work in such heat."	24	27. "A **tailor** gets paid when he **tailors**, and a **sailor** gets paid when he **sails**."	57
14. "Here is a **dollar**," said the **doctor**.	26	28. But this time a **beggar** got paid, and all he did was **think**.	44

(NOTE: Horizontal vs. vertical format is intentional.) Reading (Book C) New York; J. B. Lippincott Co., 1969. *Run on* red

**story from Lippincott Basic*

4. Maintain practice at a sentence or paragraph level, not at a word-list level.

5. Practice spelling by dictating passages from present reading material (e.g., basal reader, social studies book, library book). Use a partner system.

6. Encourage pupils to compose sentences and paragraphs with new words.

7. Include self-evaluation (proofreading) practice.

8. Encourage identifying "words to learn" in reading material.

9. Have student dictate an experience onto a tape. Replay the dictation as spelling dictation ("spelling language experience").

10. Use spelling, copying, and tracing practice for the slower learning students.

11. Complement the hear-write (dictation) practice with think-write practice.

12. **Practice** alone, with a partner, at home, in the library . . . .

13. Remember inner, transfer, and application (outcome goal) practice.

Incentives and Consequences

1. Use spelling games and machines (e.g., language master, Texas Instruments Speak and Spell) as earned consequences for improvement in spelling performance instead of as primary instructional devices.

2. Provide precise feedback regarding progress.

* * *

The discussions in the handwriting and spelling areas were directed at two main goals: (1) to demonstrate the application of the concepts introduced in the Overview section and (2) to emphasize how fundamental handwriting and spelling are to performance at higher writing levels.

The remaining area discussions are more abbreviated and assume you have a degree of comfort with the basic concepts.

CAPITALIZATION AND PUNCTUATION

Reading has created practice in visualizing correct capitalization and punctuation. Handwriting reinforces this visualization with kinesthetic practice beginning at the word-level for capitalization and at the simple-sentence-level with punctuation.

The large amount of practice provided in reading and handwriting enables the internalization of many of the capitalization and punctuation concepts. Consequently, the need for detailed instruction is significantly reduced.

Pinpointing

General Outcome Goal: Our students will be able to accurately and fluently capitalize and punctuate in performing day-to-day writing activities (i.e., the 17 outcome goals).

Figure 14 (page 46) lists the capitalization skills and Figure 15 (page 47) lists the punctuation skills in the Curriculum Ladder format. The reading material in use, along with student performance, determines the sequence of skill introduction.

Proficiency

As indicated on Figure 2, a distinction is made between proficiency on practice/evaluation sheets and in prose writing.

The standards are the same for both capitalization and punctuation.

Practice/Evaluation Sheets

In Prose Writing

50-70 correct responses/minute

AND

2 or fewer incorrect responses/minute

1-10 response/minute

AND

99% correct

Capitalization and punctuation responses are isolated on the practice/evaluation sheets. They are mixed in with the other response categories (e.g., handwriting, spelling, word usage) in prose writing. This accounts for the significant difference in proficiency standards.

The number of capitalization and punctuation responses made in a prose work varies with the complexity of the sentences, the topic under discussion, the type of prose (e.g., letter, essay, report), etc. This variation is adjusted for within the fluency range of 1-10 responses/minute.

The writing fluency of 20-40 words per minute (mentioned in the spelling section) is maintained, as capitalization and punctuation responses are made in prose writing.

Evaluation Procedures and Materials

The evaluation focus for capitalization is: **the number of words capitalized correctly per minute and incorrectly per minute.**

The evaluation focus for punctuation is: **the number of punctuation responses made correctly per minute and incorrectly per minute.**

The evaluation format remains at the "hear-write (dictating) passages" level. Encourage "think-write" activities. However, it is still premature to **require** this as the evaluation format.

Figure 16 (page 48) and 17 (page 49) present a few of the practice/evaluation sheets in capitalization and punctuation, respectively.

By the time formal capitalization and punctuation instruction is introduced, evaluation can focus at the sentence and paragraph level.

The passages used in spelling (or any other dictated passages) can be used in evaluating capitalization and punctuation.

Correcting

Capitalization

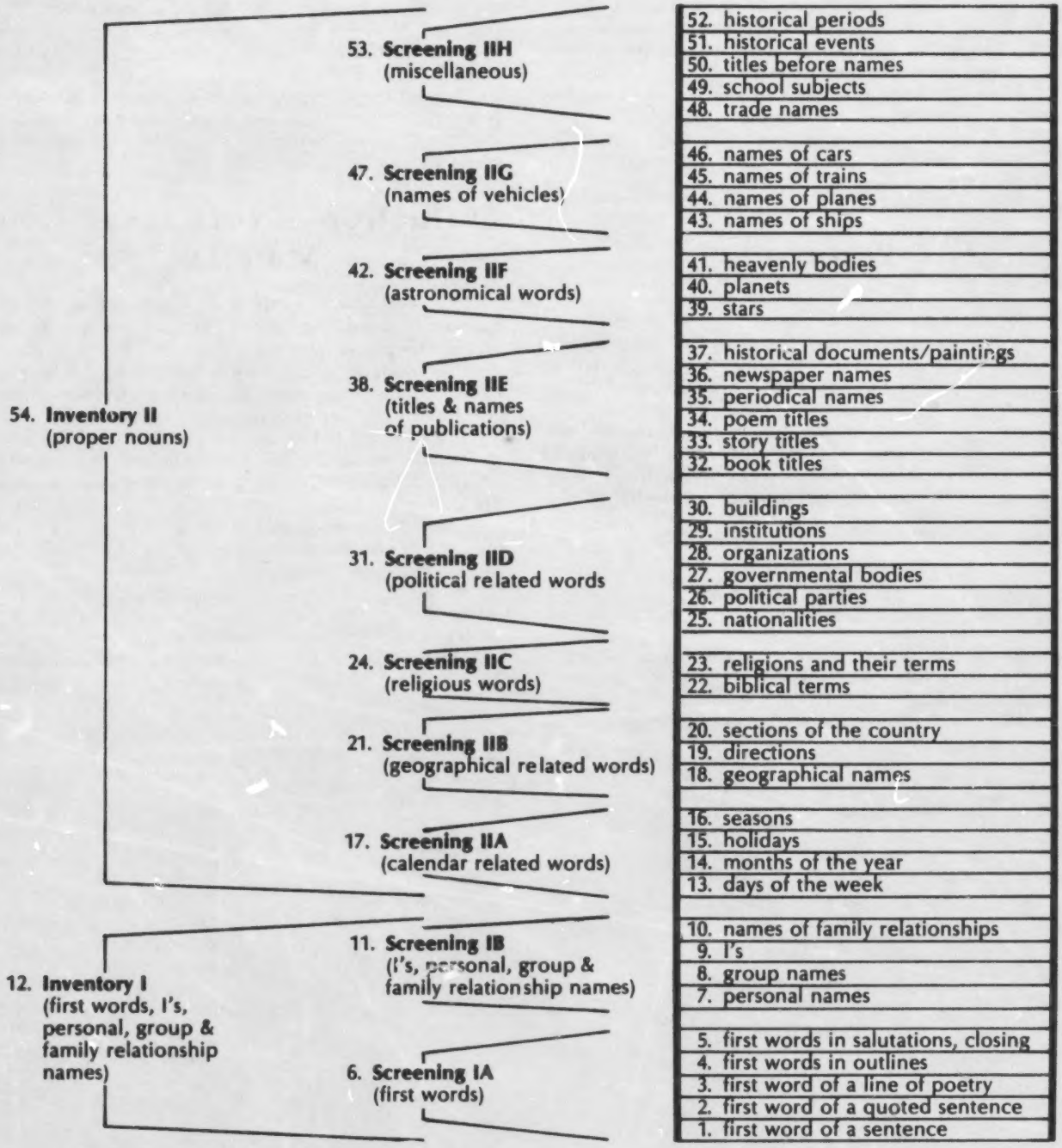
Correct	Incorrect
appropriate words capitalized (check Curriculum Ladder)	(1) wrong word capitalized (2) right word not capitalized

Punctuation

Correct	Incorrect
appropriate punctuation included (check Curriculum Ladder)	(1) omits punctuation mark (2) substitutes incorrect punctuation mark (3) adds incorrect punctuation mark

Refer back to the Overview section to review the "Steps in Conducting an Evaluation Sample".

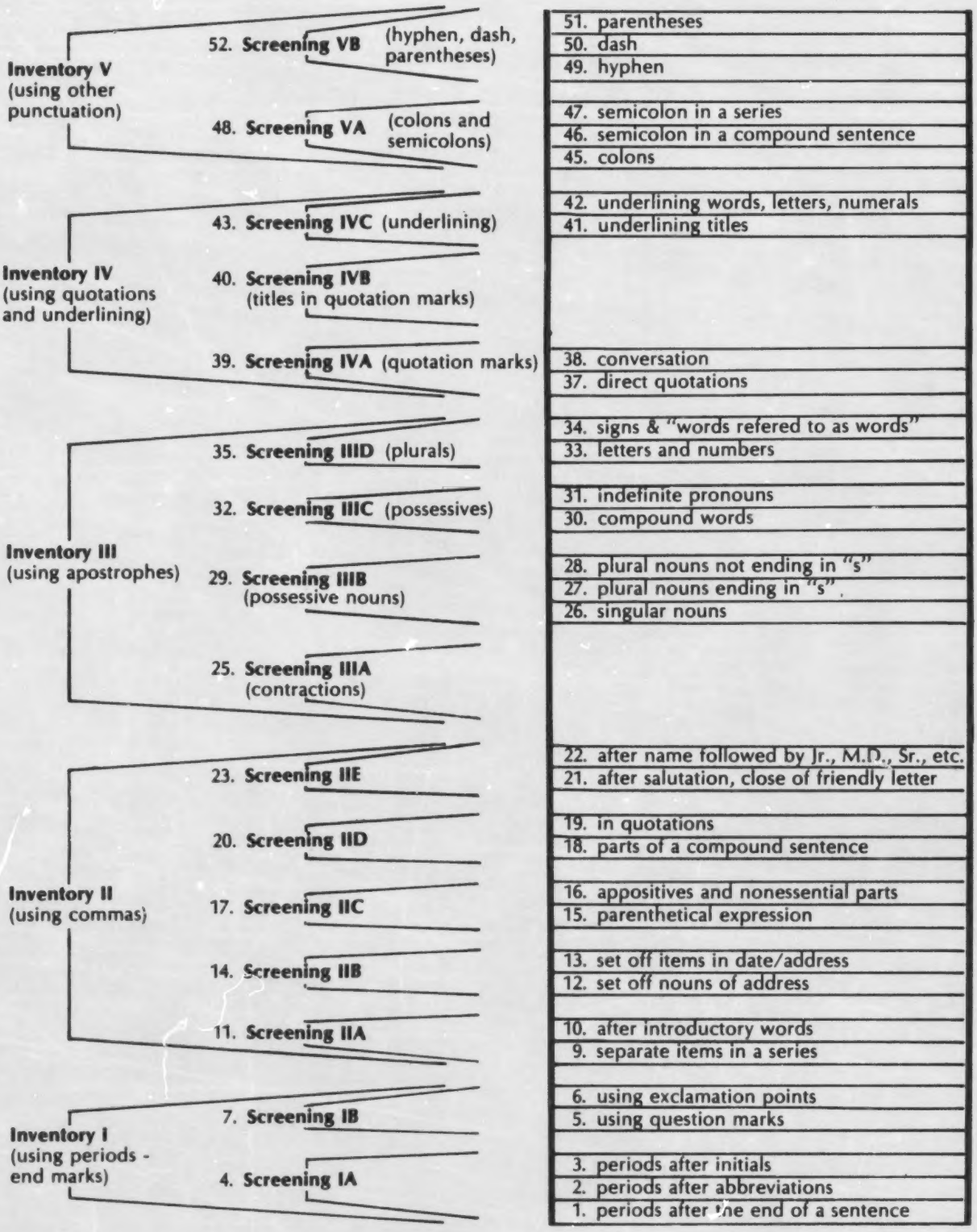
Figure 14 Curriculum Ladder for Capitalization


52. historical periods
51. historical events
50. titles before names
49. school subjects
48. trade names
46. names of cars
45. names of trains
44. names of planes
43. names of ships
41. heavenly bodies
40. planets
39. stars
37. historical documents/paintings
36. newspaper names
35. periodical names
34. poem titles
33. story titles
32. book titles
30. buildings
29. institutions
28. organizations
27. governmental bodies
26. political parties
25. nationalities
23. religions and their terms
22. biblical terms
20. sections of the country
19. directions
18. geographical names
16. seasons
15. holidays
14. months of the year
13. days of the week
10. names of family relationships
9. I's
8. group names
7. personal names
5. first words in salutations, closing
4. first words in outlines
3. first word of a line of poetry
2. first word of a quoted sentence
1. first word of a sentence
53. Screening IIH (miscellaneous)
47. Screening IIG (names of vehicles)
42. Screening IIF (astronomical words)
38. Screening IIE (titles & names of publications)
31. Screening IID (political related words
24. Screening IIC (religious words)
21. Screening IIB (geographical related words)
17. Screening IIA (calendar related words)
11. Screening IB (I's, personal, group & family relationship names)
6. Screening IA (first words)
54. Inventory II (proper nouns)
12. Inventory I (first words, I's, personal, group & family relationship names)

Item:

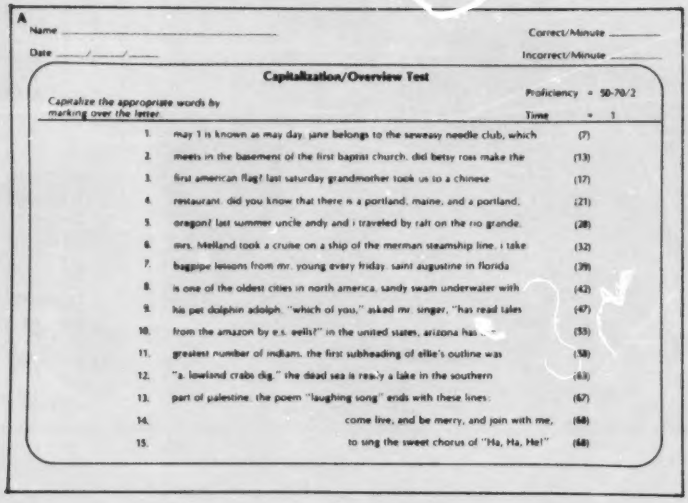
Our students will be able to accurately and fluently capitalize in written context:

Figure 15 Curriculum Ladder for Punctuation


Inventory V
(using other punctuation)
52. Screening VB (hyphen, dash, parentheses)
48. Screening VA (colons and semicolons)
Inventory IV
(using quotations and underlining)
43. Screening IVC (underlining)
40. Screening IVB (titles in quotation marks)
39. Screening IVA (quotation marks)
Inventory III
(using apostrophes)
35. Screening IIID (plurals)
32. Screening IIIC (possessives)
29. Screening IIIB (possessive nouns)
25. Screening IIIA (contractions)
Inventory II
(using commas)
23. Screening IIE
20. Screening IID
17. Screening IIC
14. Screening IIB
11. Screening IIA
Inventory I
(using periods - end marks)
7. Screening IB
4. Screening IA
51. parentheses
50. dash
49. hyphen
47. semicolon in a series
46. semicolon in a compound sentence
45. colons
42. underlining words, letters, numerals
41. underlining titles
38. conversation
37. direct quotations
34. signs & "words refered to as words"
33. letters and numbers
31. indefinite pronouns
30. compound words
28. plural nouns not ending in "s"
27. plural nouns ending in "s"
26. singular nouns
22. after name followed by Jr., M.D., Sr., etc.
21. after salutation, close of friendly letter
19. in quotations
18. parts of a compound sentence
16. appositives and nonessential parts
15. parenthetical expression
13. set off items in date/address
12. set off nouns of address
10. after introductory words
9. separate items in a series
6. using exclamation points
5. using question marks
3. periods after initials
2. periods after abbreviations
1. periods after the end of a sentence

Item: Our students will be able to accurately and fluently punctuate in writing:

Figure 16 Samples of Capitalization Practice/Evaluation Sheets



A

Name _____ Correct/Minute _____

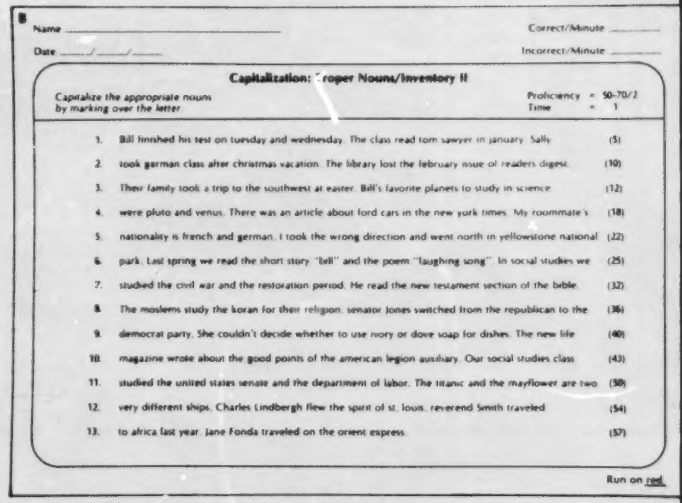
Date ____/____/____ Incorrect/Minute _____

Capitalization/Overview Test

Capitalize the appropriate words by marking over the letter.

Proficiency = 50-70/2
Time = 1

1. may 1 is known as may day. jane belongs to the seweasy needle club, which (7)
2. meets in the basement of the first baptist church. did betsy ross make the (13)
3. first american flag? last saturday grandmother took us to a chinese (17)
4. restaurant. did you know that there is a portland, maine, and a portland, (21)
5. oregon? last summer uncle andy and i traveled by raft on the rio grande. (28)
6. mrs. melland took a cruise on a ship of the merman steamship line. i take (32)
7. bagpipe lessons from mr. young every friday. saint augustine in florida (39)
8. is one of the oldest cities in north america. sandy swam underwater with (42)
9. his pet dolphin adolph. "which of you," asked mr. singer, "has read tales (47)
10. from the amazon by w.s. wells?" in the united states, arizona has (55)
11. greatest number of indians. the first subheading of ellie's outline was (58)
12. "a. lowland crabs dig," the dead sea is really a lake in the southern (63)
13. part of palestine. the poem "laughing song" ends with these lines: (67)
14. come live, and be merry, and join with me, (68)
15. to sing the sweet chorus of "Ha, Ha, He!" (68)



B

Name _____ Correct/Minute _____

Date ____/____/____ Incorrect/Minute _____

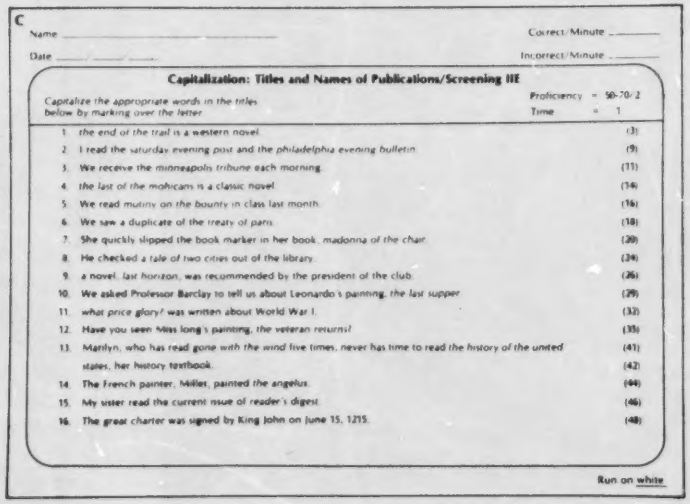
Capitalization: Proper Nouns/Inventory II

Capitalize the appropriate nouns by marking over the letter.

Proficiency = 50-70/2
Time = 1

1. Bill finished his test on tuesday and wednesday. The class read tom sawyer in january. Sally (5)
2. took german class after christmas vacation. The library lost the february issue of readers digest. (10)
3. Their family took a trip to the southwest at easter. Bill's favorite planets to study in science (12)
4. were pluto and venus. There was an article about ford cars in the new york times. My roommate's (18)
5. nationality is french and german. I took the wrong direction and went north in yellowstone national (22)
6. park. Last spring we read the short story "bill" and the poem "laughing song". In social studies we (25)
7. studied the civil war and the restoration period. He read the new testament section of the bible. (32)
8. The moslems study the koran for their religion. senator Jones switched from the republican to the (36)
9. democrat party. She couldn't decide whether to use ivory or dove soap for dishes. The new life (40)
10. magazine wrote about the good points of the american legion auxiliary. Our social studies class (43)
11. studied the united states senate and the department of labor. The titanic and the mayflower are two (50)
12. very different ships. Charles Lindbergh flew the spirit of st. louis. reverend Smith traveled (54)
13. to africa last year. Jane Fonda traveled on the orient express. (57)

Run on red



C

Name _____ Correct/Minute _____

Date ____/____/____ Incorrect/Minute _____

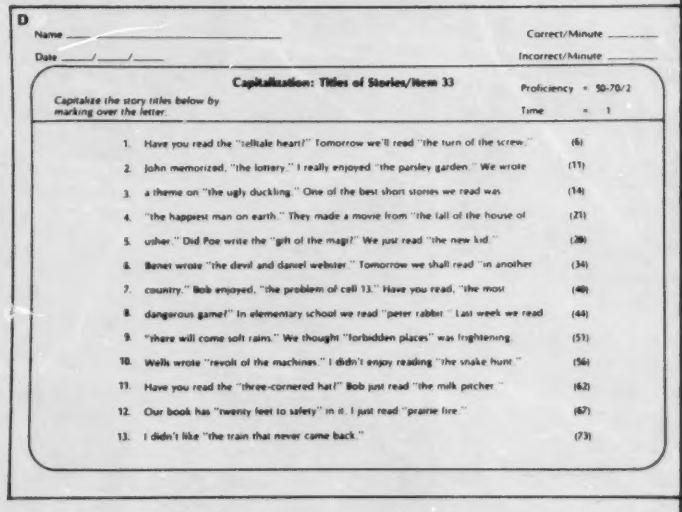
Capitalization: Titles and Names of Publications/Screening IIE

Capitalize the appropriate words in the titles below by marking over the letter.

Proficiency = 50-70/2
Time = 1

1. *the end of the trail* is a western novel. (3)
2. I read the *saturday evening post* and the *philadelphia evening bulletin*. (9)
3. We receive the *minneapolis tribune* each morning. (11)
4. *the last of the mohicans* is a classic novel. (14)
5. We read *mutiny on the bounty* in class last month. (16)
6. We saw a duplicate of the *treaty of paris*. (18)
7. She quickly slipped the book marker in her book, *madonna of the chair*. (30)
8. He checked a *tale of two cities* out of the library. (34)
9. a novel, *last horizon*, was recommended by the president of the club. (26)
10. We asked Professor Barclay to tell us about Leonardo's painting, *the last supper*. (29)
11. *what price glory?* was written about World War I. (32)
12. Have you seen Miss long's painting, *the veteran returns*? (35)
13. Marilyn, who has read *gone with the wind* five times, never has time to read *the history of the united states*, her history textbook. (41) (42)
14. The French painter, Millet, painted *the angelus*. (44)
15. My sister read the current issue of *reader's digest*. (46)
16. The great charter was signed by King John on June 15, 1215. (48)

Run on white



D

Name _____ Correct/Minute _____

Date ____/____/____ Incorrect/Minute _____

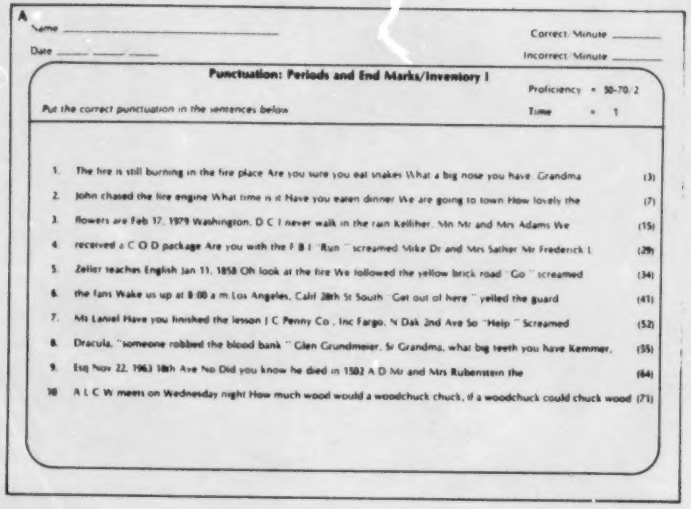
Capitalization: Titles of Stories/Item 33

Capitalize the story titles below by marking over the letter.

Proficiency = 50-70/2
Time = 1

1. Have you read the "telltale heart?" Tomorrow we'll read "the turn of the screw." (6)
2. John memorized, "the lottery." I really enjoyed "the parsley garden." We wrote (11)
3. a theme on "the ugly duckling." One of the best short stories we read was (14)
4. "the happiest man on earth." They made a movie from "the fall of the house of (21)
5. usher." Did Poe write the "gift of the magi?" We just read "the new kid." (28)
6. Benet wrote "the devil and daniel webster." Tomorrow we shall read "in another (34)
7. country." Bob enjoyed, "the problem of cell 13." Have you read, "the most (40)
8. dangerous game?" In elementary school we read "peter rabbit." Last week we read (44)
9. "there will come soft rains." We thought "forbidden places" was frightening. (51)
10. Wells wrote "revolt of the machines." I didn't enjoy reading "the snake hunt." (56)
11. Have you read the "three-cornered hat?" Bob just read "the milk pitcher." (62)
12. Our book has "twenty feet to safety" in it. I just read "prairie fire." (67)
13. I didn't like "the train that never came back." (73)

Figure 17 Samples of Punctuation Practice/Evaluation Sheets



A

Name _____ Correct/Minute _____

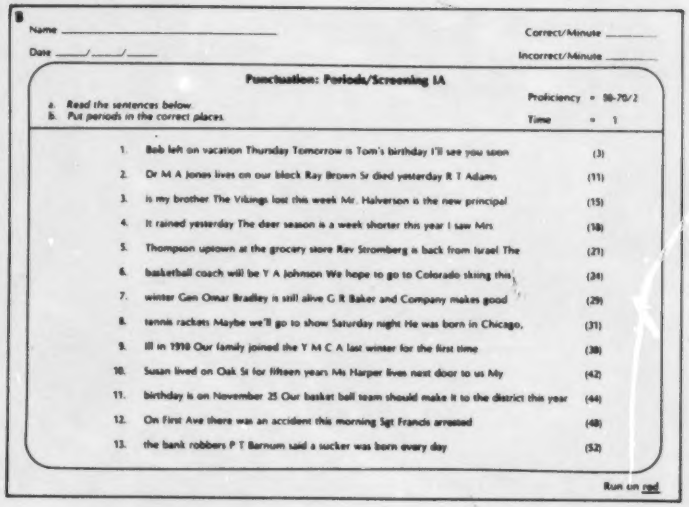
Date ____/____/____ Incorrect/Minute _____

Punctuation: Periods and End Marks/Inventory 1

Proficiency = 90-70/2

Put the correct punctuation in the sentences below. Time = 1

1. The fire is still burning in the fire place Are you sure you eat snakes What a big nose you have Grandma (3)
2. John chased the fire engine What time is it Have you eaten dinner We are going to town How lovely the (7)
3. flowers are Feb 17, 1979 Washington, D C I never walk in the rain Kelliher, Mn Mr and Mrs Adams We (15)
4. received a C O D package Are you with the F B I "Run " screamed Mike Dr and Mrs Sather Mr Frederick L (29)
5. Zeller teaches English Jan 11, 1858 Oh look at the fire We followed the yellow brick road "Go " screamed (34)
6. the fans Wake us up at 8 00 a m Los Angeles, Calif 28th St South "Get out of here " yelled the guard (41)
7. Ms Lanier Have you finished the lesson J C Penny Co , Inc Fargo, N Dak 2nd Ave So "Help " Screamed (52)
8. Dracula, "someone robbed the blood bank " Glen Grundmeier, Sr Grandma, what big teeth you have Kemmer, (55)
9. Esq Nov 22, 1963 18th Ave No Did you know he died in 1582 A D Mr and Mrs Rubenstein the (64)
10. A L C W meets on Wednesday night How much wood would a woodchuck chuck, if a woodchuck could chuck wood (71)



B

Name _____ Correct/Minute _____

Date ____/____/____ Incorrect/Minute _____

Punctuation: Periods/Screening 1A

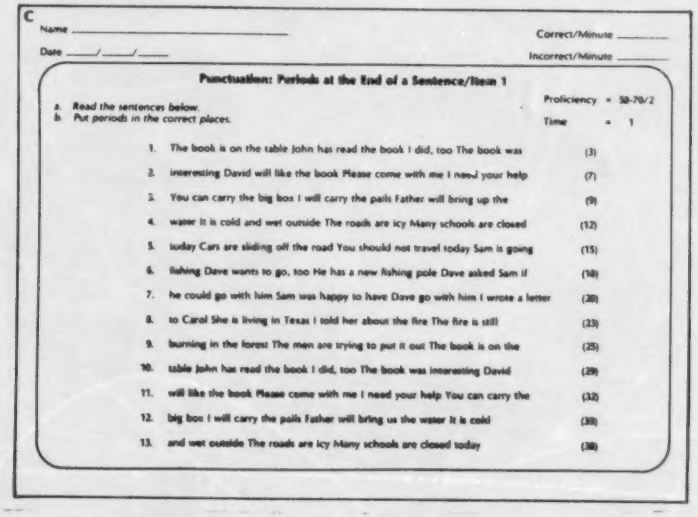
a. *Read the sentences below.*
b. *Put periods in the correct places.*

Proficiency = 90-70/2

Time = 1

1. Bob left on vacation Thursday Tomorrow is Tom's birthday I'll see you soon (3)
2. Dr M A Jones lives on our block Ray Brown Sr died yesterday R T Adams (11)
3. is my brother The Vikings lost this week Mr. Halverson is the new principal (15)
4. It rained yesterday The deer season is a week shorter this year I saw Mrs (18)
5. Thompson uptown at the grocery store Rev Stromberg is back from Israel The (27)
6. basketball coach will be Y A Johnson We hope to go to Colorado skiing this (34)
7. winter Gen Omar Bradley is still alive G R Baker and Company makes good (39)
8. tennis rackets Maybe we'll go to show Saturday night He was born in Chicago, (37)
9. Ill in 1910 Our family joined the Y M C A last winter for the first time (38)
10. Susan lived on Oak St for fifteen years Ms Harper lives next door to us My (42)
11. birthday is on November 25 Our basket ball team should make it to the district this year (44)
12. On First Ave there was an accident this morning Sgt Francis arrested (48)
13. the bank robbers P T Barnum said a sucker was born every day (52)

Run on next



C

Name _____ Correct/Minute _____

Date ____/____/____ Incorrect/Minute _____

Punctuation: Periods at the End of a Sentence/Item 1

a. *Read the sentences below.*
b. *Put periods in the correct places.*

Proficiency = 90-70/2

Time = 1

1. The book is on the table John has read the book I did, too The book was (3)
2. interesting David will like the book Please come with me I need your help (7)
3. You can carry the big box I will carry the pails Father will bring up the (9)
4. water It is cold and wet outside The roads are icy Many schools are closed (12)
5. today Cars are sliding off the road You should not travel today Sam is going (15)
6. fishing Dave wants to go, too He has a new fishing pole Dave asked Sam if (18)
7. he could go with him Sam was happy to have Dave go with him I wrote a letter (28)
8. to Carol She is living in Texas I told her about the fire The fire is still (23)
9. burning in the forest The men are trying to put it out The book is on the (25)
10. table John has read the book I did, too The book was interesting David (29)
11. will like the book Please come with me I need your help You can carry the (32)
12. big box I will carry the pails Father will bring us the water It is cold (33)
13. and wet outside The roads are icy Many schools are closed today (38)

Instruction Placement

Because the proficiency standards are the same for capitalization and punctuation, the instructional placement "guidelines" are the same.

Practice/Evaluation Sheets	10-30 correct per minute
	AND/OR
	5-15 incorrect per minute
Prose Writing	10-20 words per minute
	AND/OR
	60%-80% correct capitalization and punctuation

Generic Teaching Tactics

Slicing

The possible capitalization and punctuation curriculum placement slices are listed below:

Seventeen Outcome Goals

Overview Level (paragraphs from the newspaper)

↓

Inventory Level (passages from reading material encompassing many Items)

↓

Screening Level (passages from reading material encompassing a few Items)

↓

Item Level (sentences or shorter paragraphs which focus on one or two specific skills)

↓

spelling
↓
handwriting } prerequisites
↓
reading

Instruction - Demonstration

1. Demonstrate capitalization and punctuation responses on practice/evaluation sheets and in prose passages.

2. When necessary explain as you demonstrate (e.g., "Capitalize 'T' in 'The' because it is the **first word** of a sentence; capitalize 'F' in 'Frank' because it is a persons name; place **period at end of sentence**, etc.").

Direct Practice

1. Maintain handwriting and spelling proficiency when practicing capitalization and punctuation.

2. Copy passages from reading materials using correct capitalization and punctuation.

3. Develop dictated passages, with heavy concentrations of specific capitalization and punctuation skills. Use for concentrated practice.

4. Encourage think-write practice of capitalization and punctuation skills.

5. Make audio-tapes for practice which are like talking into a dictaphone]e.g., Dear Mr. Smith - ("capital D-ear; capital M, r, period; capital S-mith; colon); skip two spaces, indent five spaces for paragraph[, etc.

Incentives and Consequences

1. Provide feedback about progress.

* * *

Handwriting, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation represent a first stage in written communication. The skills in these areas must be automatic (i.e., almost no conscious thought).

The areas of sentence and paragraph structure, grammatical usage, and vocabulary usage, vary with the intent of the writing. Consequently, these areas require a combination of automatic mastery and thoughtful selection regarding usage.

Sentence and Paragraph Structure

Again from the practice in reading and the previous writing areas, much of the appropriate sentence and paragraph structures are already practiced and internalized.

Pinpointing

General Outcome Goal: Our students will be able to accurately and fluently write sentences and paragraphs in performing day to day writing activities (i.e., 17 outcome goals).

Figure 18 (page 52) presents the Curriculum Ladder for sentence and paragraph structure.

Proficiency

The proficiency standards for sentence and paragraph structure are presented below:

writes sentences correctly on practice/evaluation sheets and in **prose**	1-10 sentences per minute **AND** 99% correct
forms and organizes paragraphs correctly on practice/evaluation **sheets and** in prose writing.	.5 - 2 paragraphs per minute[24] **AND** 99% correct

Ninety-nine percent of all sentences and paragraphs are to be correct while maintaining the fluency ranges of 1-10 sentences per minute and .5-2 paragraphs per minute.

Writing fluency (i.e., 20-40 words per minute) and punctuation proficiency are prerequisite to establishing proficiency in sentence and paragraph structure.

The number of words varies in different sentences or paragraphs. For example, 25 words written in one sentence or 5 words written in each of 5 different sentences, stays within the 20-40 words per minute range. However, there is a difference of 1 sentence per minute versus 5 sentences per minute. This accounts for the variation in the sentence and paragraph-per-minute ranges.[25]

[24]".5" performance refers to "once in two minutes" (e.g., 1 paragraph written (2 minutes) = .5 or ½ a paragraph per minute).

[25]This example also relates to the capitalization and punctuation proficiency ranges. In the 25 word sentence, the fewest capital letters possible is one (i.e., the first word of the sentence). The fewest punctuation marks is also one (i.e., the ending punctuation: a period, a question mark). Five capitols and five punctuation marks are the least possible with five sentences.

Of course, additional capitalization (e.g., proper nouns) and punctuation (e.g., commas, colons) can move the responses per minute toward the upper end of the proficiency range.

Evaluation Procedures and Materials

The evaluation focus for sentence structure is: **the number of sentences written correctly and incorrectly per minute.**

The evaluation focus for paragraph structure is: **the number of paragraphs formed and organized correctly and incorrectly per minute.**

The evaluation format is at the "think-write paragraph level" for both sentence and paragraph structure.

Figures 19 (page 53) and 20 (page 54) represent a sample of the practice/evaluation sheets in the sentence and paragraph structure areas.

Correcting

Sentence Structure

Correct

(sentences written correctly)

- complete sentence (complete thought)
- appropriately punctuated sentence

Incorrect

(sentences written incorrectly)

- sentence fragment (incomplete thought)
- run-on sentence

Paragraph Structure

Correct

(paragraphs formed correctly)

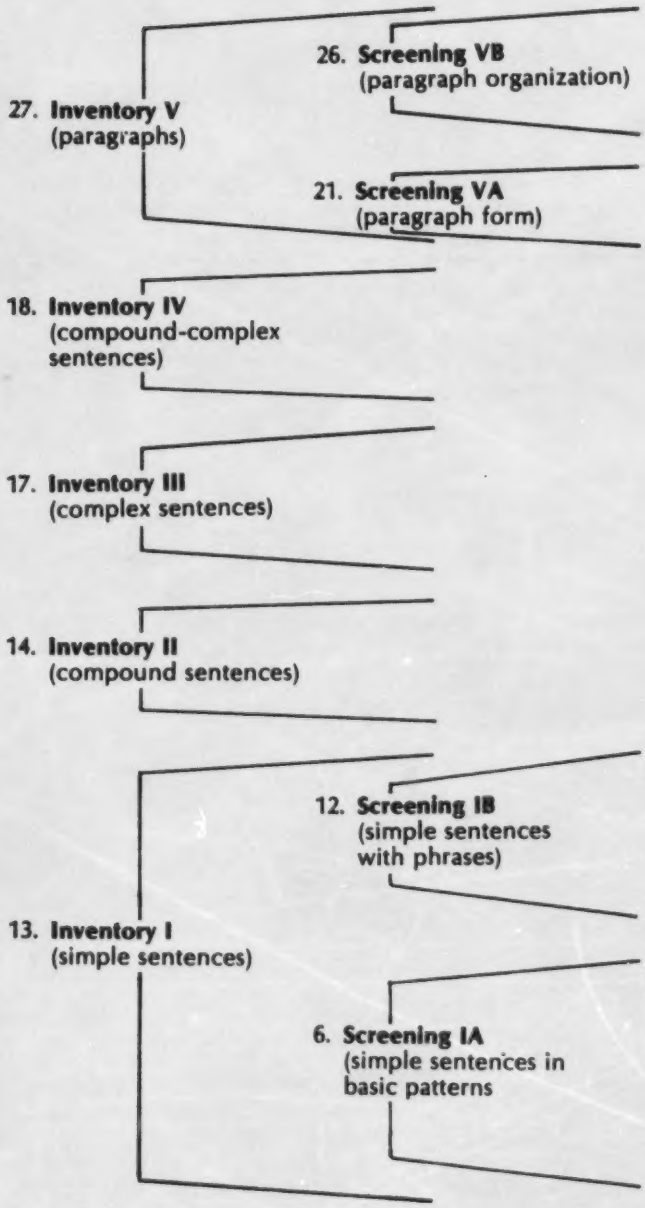
- indents 3-5 spaces
- left margins in-line

(paragraph organized correctly)

- topic sentence present
- supporting sentences present
- summary sentence present
- connecting words present

Incorrect

Figure 18 Curriculum Ladder for Sentence and Paragraph Structure

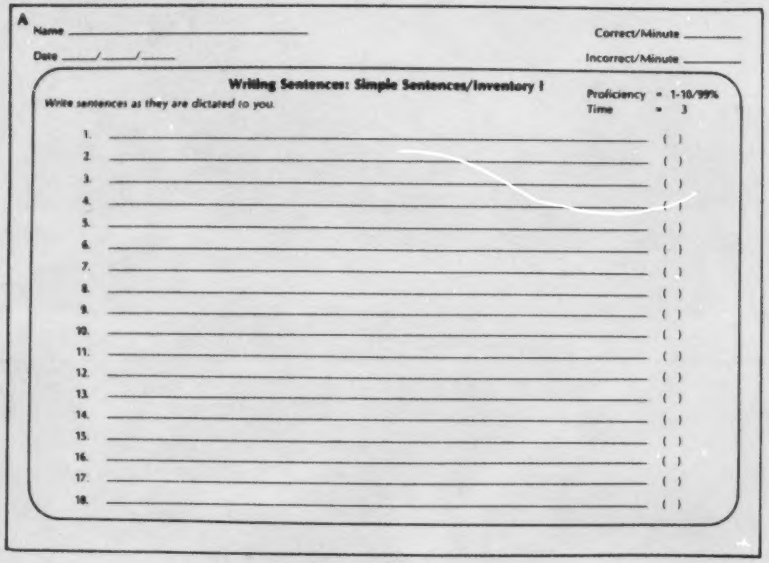


25. connecting words
24. summary sentences
23. supporting sentences
22. topic sentences
20. paragraph margins
19. indented paragraphs
16. complex sentences with subordinating conjunctions
15. complex sentences with relative pronouns
11. sentences with appositive phrases
10. sentences with infinitive phrases
9. sentences with gerund phrases
8. sentences with participial phrases
7. sentences with prepositional phrases
5. subject-linking verb-complement sentences
4. subject-verb-adverb sentences
3. subject-verb-object sentences
2. compound subject-compound verb sentences
1. subject-verb sentences

Item:

Our students will be able to accurately and fluently write:

Figure 19 Samples of Sentence Structure Practice/Evaluation Sheets



A

Name _____ Correct/Minute _____

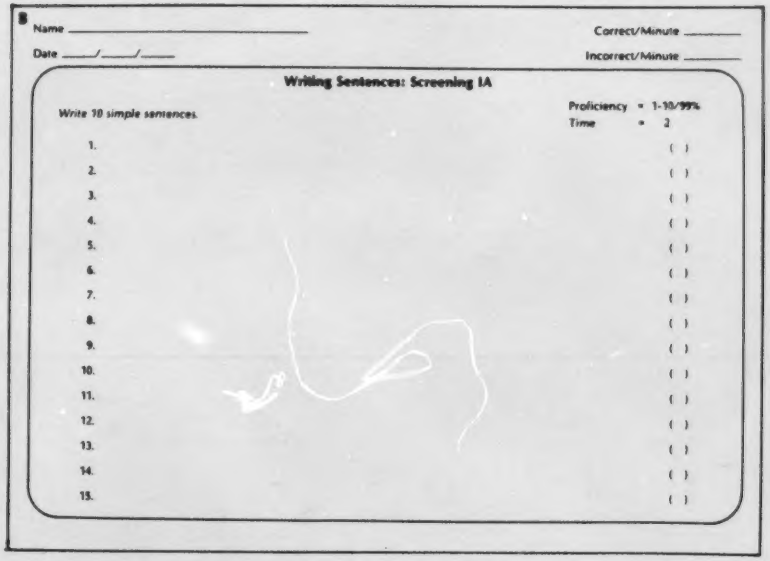
Date ____/____/____ Incorrect/Minute _____

Writing Sentences: Simple Sentences/Inventory I

Proficiency = 1-10/99%
Time = 3

Write sentences as they are dictated to you.

1. _____ ( )
2. _____ ( )
3. _____ ( )
4. _____ ( )
5. _____ ( )
6. _____ ( )
7. _____ ( )
8. _____ ( )
9. _____ ( )
10. _____ ( )
11. _____ ( )
12. _____ ( )
13. _____ ( )
14. _____ ( )
15. _____ ( )
16. _____ ( )
17. _____ ( )
18. _____ ( )



B

Name _____ Correct/Minute _____

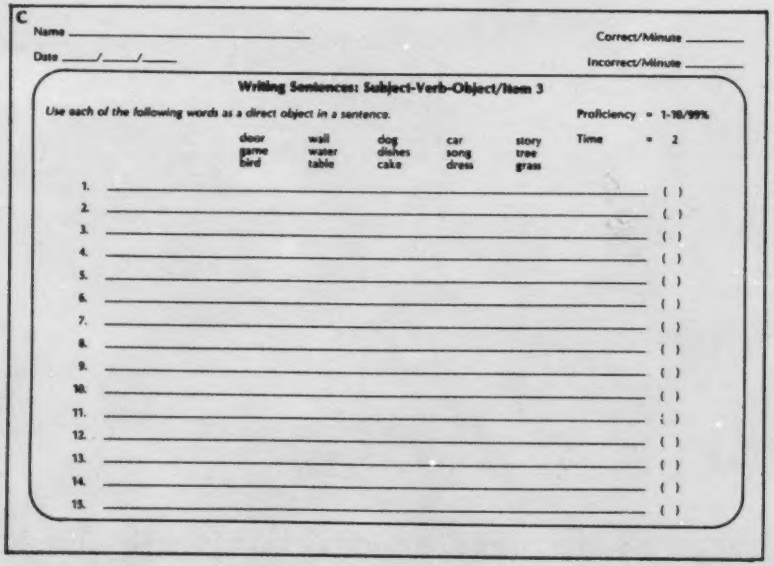
Date ____/____/____ Incorrect/Minute _____

Writing Sentences: Screening IA

Proficiency = 1-10/99%
Time = 2

Write 10 simple sentences.

1. ( )
2. ( )
3. ( )
4. ( )
5. ( )
6. ( )
7. ( )
8. ( )
9. ( )
10. ( )
11. ( )
12. ( )
13. ( )
14. ( )
15. ( )



C

Name _____ Correct/Minute _____

Date ____/____/____ Incorrect/Minute _____

Writing Sentences: Subject-Verb-Object/Item 3

Use each of the following words as a direct object in a sentence.

Proficiency = 1-10/99%
Time = 2

door	wall	dog	car	story	
game	water	dishes	song	tree	
bird	table	cake	dress	grass	

1. _____ ( )
2. _____ ( )
3. _____ ( )
4. _____ ( )
5. _____ ( )
6. _____ ( )
7. _____ ( )
8. _____ ( )
9. _____ ( )
10. _____ ( )
11. _____ ( )
12. _____ ( )
13. _____ ( )
14. _____ ( )
15. _____ ( )

Figure 20 Samples of Paragraph Structure Practice/Evaluation Sheets

A

Name _____ Correct/Minute _____

Date ____/____/____ Incorrect/Minute _____

Writing Paragraphs/Inventory I

Instructions: write paragraphs with left margin in-line and properly indented.

Correction: count margins and indented paragraphs correct and incorrect.

Proficiency = .5-2/99%

Time = 3

(NOTE: Horizontal vs. vertical format is intentional.)

Run on red

B

Name _____ Correct/Minute _____

Date ____/____/____ Incorrect/Minute _____

Writing Paragraphs/Inventory II

Instructions: write paragraphs with a topic sentence, supporting sentences, summary sentence plus appropriate connecting words.

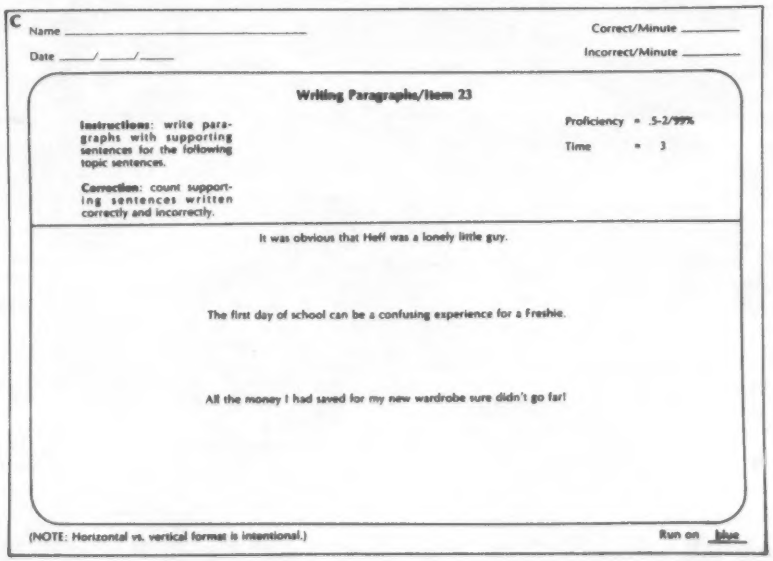
Correction: count correct and incorrect topic, supporting and summary sentences plus connecting words.

Proficiency = .5-2/99%

Time = 3

(NOTE: Horizontal vs. vertical format is intentional.)

Run on red



C

Name _____ Correct/Minute _____

Date ____/____/____ Incorrect/Minute _____

Writing Paragraphs/Item 23

Instructions: write paragraphs with supporting sentences for the following topic sentences.

Correction: count supporting sentences written correctly and incorrectly.

Proficiency = .5-2/99%

Time = 3

It was obvious that Heff was a lonely little guy.

The first day of school can be a confusing experience for a Freshie.

All the money I had saved for my new wardrobe sure didn't go far!

(NOTE: Horizontal vs. vertical format is intentional.)

Run on blue

(paragraphs formed incorrectly)

- indents more or less than 3-5 spaces
- left margins out-of-line

(paragraph organized incorrectly)

- topic sentence not present
- supporting sentences not present
- summary sentence not present
- correcting words not present

Refer to the Overview section to review the "Steps in Conducting an Evaluation Sample".

Instructional Placement

The "guidelines" for instructional placement in sentence and paragraph structure are as follows:

10-20 words per minute **AND/OR** 60%-80% of sentences correct	10-20 words per minute **AND/OR** 60%-80% of paragraph correct

Generic Teaching Tactics

Remember the teaching focus is on usage, not on identification and analysis. Students can learn to form sentences and paragraphs by the "practice" of writing sentences and paragraphs, without being able to identify or talk about sentences and paragraphs.

When learning problems occur, slice, demonstrate, and direct practice and provide corrective, positive feedback.

Sentence and paragraph structure, gramatical usage, and vocabulary usage require concurrent emphasis.

All four areas must be considered simultaneously in selecting the appropriate words and structures to communicate different messages.

GRAMMATICAL AND VOCABULARY USAGE

Word usage has two components; the use of grammatically (syntactically) correct words and the use of semantically correct words.

As in previous areas discussed, the correct usage of words, gramatically and semantically, is largely internalized when formal instruction begins.

Pinpointing

> **General Outcome Goal**: Our students will be able to accurately and fluently use words (grammatically and semantically) in performing day-to day writing activities (i.e., the 17 outcome goals).

Figure 21 (page 57) lists the grammatical usage skills in the Curriculum Ladder Format.

The entire dictionary can be considered the Curriculum Ladder for vocabulary usage (word choice). Consequently, there is not one Curriculum Ladder which represents the entire vocabulary area.

Below are listed some of the categories under which vocabulary is commonly classified:

1. synonyms
2. antonyms
3. homonyms
4. content specific (e.g., U.S. History, Physics, Music, Art)
5. foreign words (e.g., enchilada, ala carte)
6. abbreviations (e.g., People - Mr., Ms., Dr.; State Postal Abbreviations - IA, OR, LA)

Figure 22 (page 58) depicts a portion of a Curriculum Ladder in homonym usage.

Proficiency

All words used in writing are: grammatical units (i.e., a part of speech) and also a semantic unit of meaning. Consequently, the general fluency standard of 20-40 words per minute serves as the fluency standard for both grammatical and vocabulary usage. To meet the accuracy standard, 99 percent of the words must be correct in terms of grammatical and semantic usage.

20-40 words written/minute
AND
99% correct

If 20-40 words are written per minute, a pupil is fluent in terms of grammatical and semantic usage. When 99 percent of these words are also correct, the student is proficient in the mechanics (not creativity) of word usage.

Evaluation Procedures and Materials

The evaluation focus for grammatical usage is: **the number of words written grammatically correct per minute and incorrect per minute.**

The evaluation focus for vocabulary usage is: **the number of words written semantically correct per minute and incorrect per minute.**

The evaluation format is at the "think-write a personal letter or story level". Evaluation of performance in a "think-write prose" format requires a certain degree of standardization to facilitate across and within student comparisons. An example of this type of standardization follows.

1. In class, once a week, write a prose passage for 15 minutes.
2. Assign a common topic or picture.
3. Maintain standard directions such as the following: "Using this picture, write a prose passage in 15 minutes. Pay attention to handwriting, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammatical usage, vocabulary choice, and sentence and paragraph structure. Organize your material."

Figures 23 (page 59) and 24 (page 60) show samples of practice/evaluation sheets in the grammar and vocabulary usage areas.

Correcting

Grammatical Usage

Correct

(Words used grammatically correct)

(1) uses problem words correctly

(2) uses word as part of speech correctly (see Curriculum Ladder)

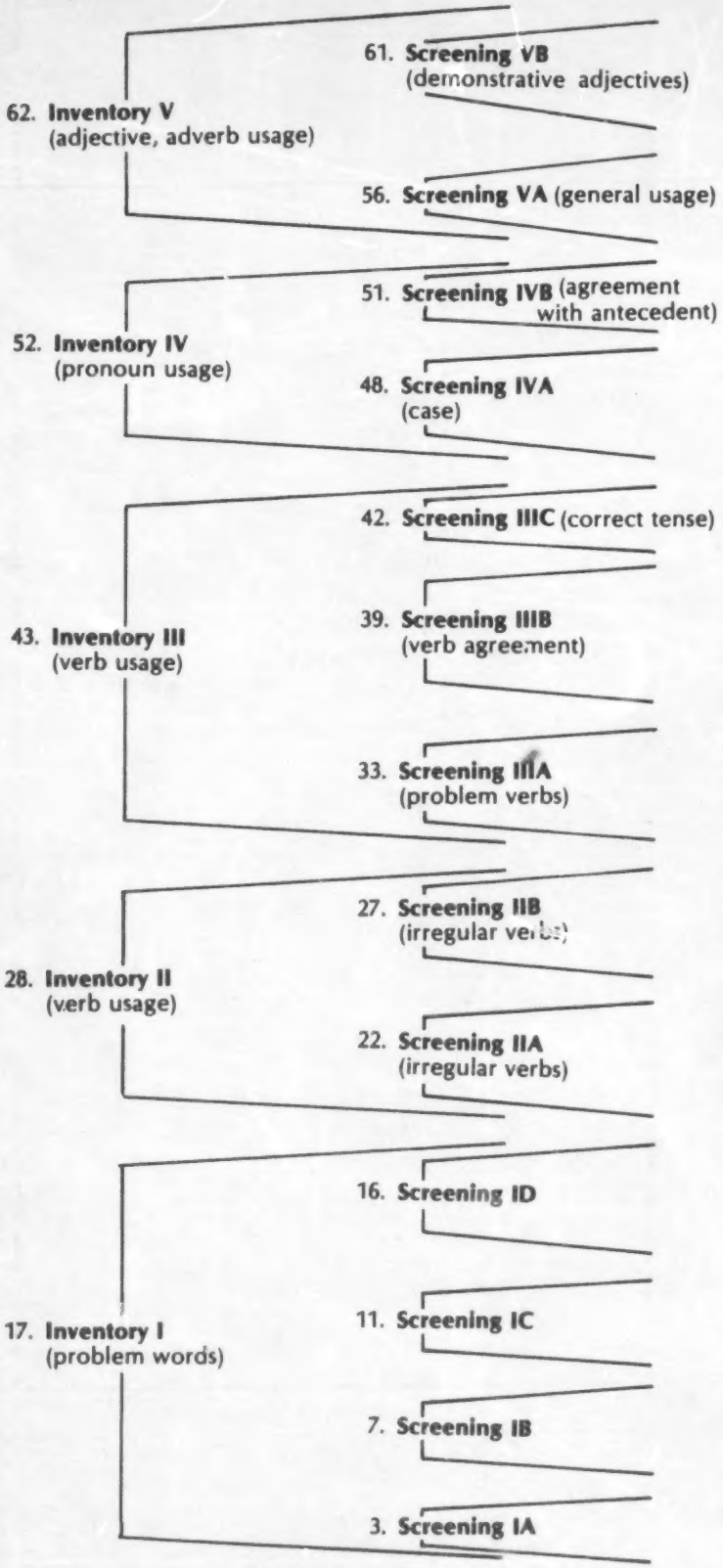
Incorrect

(words used grammatically incorrect)

(1) uses problem words incorrectly

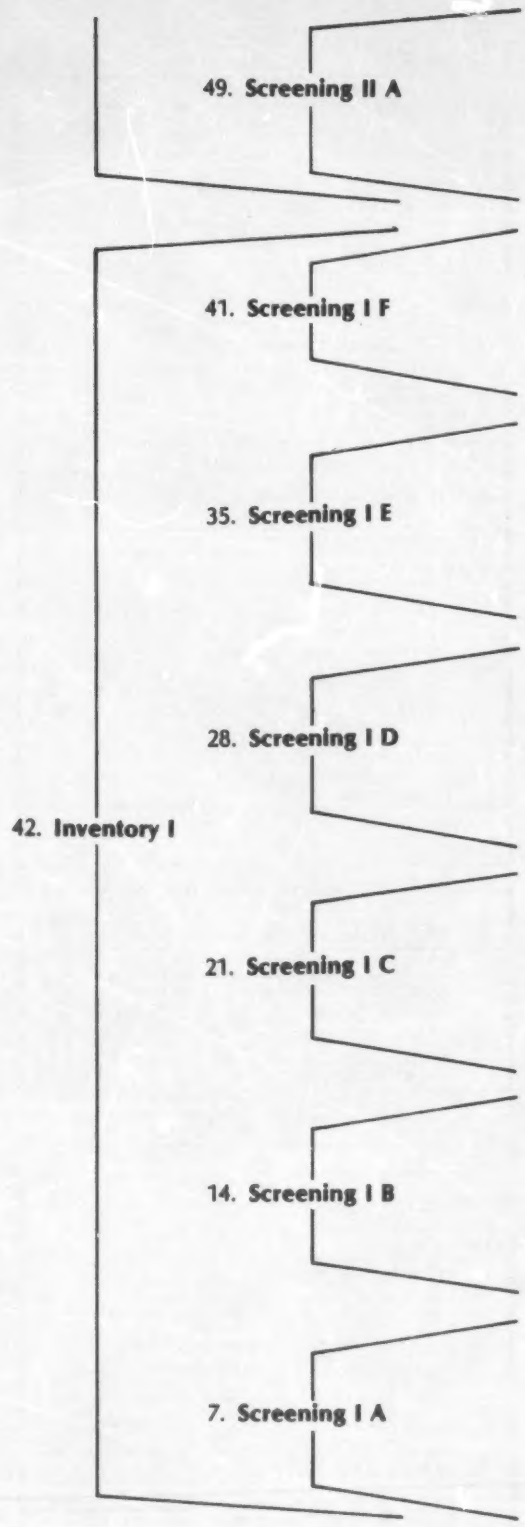
(2) uses word as part of speech incorrectly

Figure 21 Curriculum Ladder for Grammatical Usage


61. Screening VB (demonstrative adjectives)
62. Inventory V (adjective, adverb usage)
56. Screening VA (general usage)
51. Screening IVB (agreement with antecedent)
52. Inventory IV (pronoun usage)
48. Screening IVA (case)
42. Screening IIIC (correct tense)
39. Screening IIIB (verb agreement)
43. Inventory III (verb usage)
33. Screening IIIA (problem verbs)
27. Screening IIB (irregular verbs)
28. Inventory II (verb usage)
22. Screening IIA (irregular verbs)
16. Screening ID
11. Screening IC
17. Inventory I (problem words)
7. Screening IB
3. Screening IA

60. double negative
59. comparative/superlative
58. that, those
57. this, these
55. well, good
54. adverbs
53. adjectives
50. indefinite
49. singular/plural
47. possessive
46. mixed case
45. objective case
44. nominative case
41. perfect tenses
40. simple tenses
38. with conjunctions
37. with prepositional phrases
36. introductory: there, where, here
35. indefinite pronouns: is, are, was, were
34. singular/plural: don't, doesn't
32. bring, take, can, may
31. lie, lay
30. rise, raise
29. sit, set
26. ride, shake, show, spring, wear
25. blow, bring, dive, fly, freeze
24. steal, swim, swing, fear, weave
23. choose, grow, rise, speak, spin
21. go, run, see, sing, write
20. burst, come, do, drink, give
19. fall, know, ring, take, throw
18. begin, break, draw, drive, eat
15. right, write
14. heard, herd
13. where, were, wear
12. no, know, now, knew, new
10. your, you're
9. its, it's
8. whose, who's
6. learn, teach/learned, taught
5. let, leave
4. hear, here
2. to, too, two
1. there, their, they're

Figure 22 Curriculum Ladder for Vocabulary Usage/Homonyms



48. throne, thrown; straight, strait; taught, taut
47. rote, wrote; stake, steak; shone, shown
46. steppe, step; raise, raze; morning, mourning
45. holy, wholly; lain, lane; morn, mourn
44. gate, gait; hail, hale; have, halve
43. flair, flare; censor, sensor; thyme, time

40. bole, bowl; been, bean
39. canvas, canvass; blond, blonde
38. cede, seed; carat, caret, carrot; born, borne
37. fiance', fiancee'; coal, cole, ceil, seal
36. lean, lien; levee, levy; ewe, yew, you

34. dew, do, due; doe, dough; ensure, insure
33. counsel, council; dear, deer; currant, current
32. complement, compliment; creak, creek; dam, damn
31. ceiling, sealing; aisle, isle, I'll; chili, chilly
30. boar, bore; bridal, bridle; cereal, serial
29. sundae, Sunday; beach, beech; berth, birth

27. weather, whether; waist, waste; altar, alter
26. toe, tow; wail, wale, whale; but, butt
25. stationery, stationary; steal, steel; wee, we
24. some, sum; stair, stare; tea, tee
23. soar, sore; tail, tale; sole, soul
22. sew, so, sow; rout, route; rung, wrung

20. rout, route; sail, sale; sea, see
19. rap, wrap; read, red; read, reed
18. way, weigh, whey; knight, night; made, maid
17. wood, would; cell, sell; heard, herd
16. roll, role; tide, tied; wait, weight
15. ring, wring; road, rode; which, witch

13. plain, plane; principle, principal; weak, week
12. pair, pare, pear; peace, piece; scene, seen
11. heal, heel; mail, male; one, won
10. hall, haul; loan, lone; knot, not
9. foul, fowl; gene, jean; groan, grown
8. fair, fare; feat, feet; for, fore, four

6. affect, effect; grate, great; hall, haul
5. there, their, they're; hole, whole; hear, here
4. cite, sight, site; to, two, too; seem, seam
3. nose, noes, knows; lead, led; right, wright, write, rite
2. new, gnu, knew; hour, our; buy, by, bye
1. are, our; its, it's; know, no

Item:

Our students will be able to accurately and fluently use homonyms in writing.

Figure 23 Samples of Grammatical Usage Practice/Evaluation Sheets

A
Name
Date ____/____/____
Correct/Minute
Incorrect/Minute
Grammatical Usage: Verb Usage/Inventory III
Instructions: write a paragraph(s) using the verbs listed.
Correction: count verbs used correctly and incorrectly.
Proficiency = 20-40/99%
Time = 5
sit, set; lay, lie; forget, forgets; was, were; rises, raises; bring, take; can, may; is, are; feed, feeds; calls, called; has, had; sat, set; has, have; tell, tells; laid, lay; want, wants; setting, sitting; come, comes;
(NOTE: Horizontal vs. vertical format is intentional.)
Run on red
B
Name
Date ____/____/____
Correct/Minute
Incorrect/Minute
Grammatical Usage: Verb Agreement/Screening IIIB
Instructions: write a paragraph(s) using the verbs listed.
Correction: count verbs used correctly and incorrectly.
Proficiency = 20-40/99%
Time = 3
walk, walks; don't, doesn't; is, are; gave, has; won, wins; play, plays; was, were; have, has; go, goes; like, likes; run, runs; do, does; sit, sits; eat, eats; write, writes; ask, asks
(NOTE: Horizontal vs. vertical format is intentional.)
Run on white
C
Name
Date ____/____/____
Correct/Minute
Incorrect/Minute
Grammatical Usage: Was, Were/Item 35
Instructions: write a paragraph(s) using "was" and "were."
Correction: count "was" and "were" used correctly and incorrectly.
Proficiency = 20-40/99%
Time = 2
(NOTE: Horizontal vs. vertical format is intentional.)
Run on blue

Figure 24 Samples of Vocabulary Usage Practice/Evaluation Sheets

A

Name _____ Correct/Minute _____

Date ____/____/____ Incorrect/Minute _____

Vocabulary Usage: Homonyms/Item 5

Instructions: write a paragraph(s) using the homonyms listed.

Correction: count the number of homonyms used correctly and incorrectly.

Proficiency = 20-40/99%

Time = 2

there, their, they're, hole, whole, hear, here

(NOTE: Horizontal vs. vertical format is intentional.)

Run on blue

B

Name _____ Correct/Minute _____

Date ____/____/____ Incorrect/Minute _____

Vocabulary Usage: State Postal Abbreviations/Inventory I

Instructions: write or say state postal abbreviations

Correction: count letters said or written correctly and incorrectly.

Proficiency = 80-100/2 (write)
100-150/2 (say)

Time = 1

				say	write
North Carolina ____	New Hampshire ____	Nebraska ____	Georgia ____	(8)	(8)
Washington ____	Texas ____	North Dakota ____	Maine ____	(16)	(16)
Virginia ____	Wyoming ____	Maine ____	Oregon ____	(24)	(24)
Oklahoma ____	South Dakota ____	Alaska ____	Michigan ____	(32)	(32)
New York ____	Minnesota ____	California ____	Louisiana ____	(40)	(40)
Minnesota ____	Vermont ____	Illinois ____	Pennsylvania ____	(48)	(48)
Arkansas ____	Nevada ____	Arkansas ____	Wisconsin ____	(56)	(56)
Connecticut ____	Wyoming ____	Ohio ____	Iowa ____	(64)	(64)
Montana ____	Mississippi ____	Nevada ____	Indiana ____	(72)	(72)
New Jersey ____	Rhode Island ____	Michigan ____	Idaho ____	(80)	(80)
Illinois ____	Massachusetts ____	New Mexico ____	Delaware ____	(88)	(88)
Arizona ____	Hawaii ____	Kentucky ____	West Virginia ____	(96)	(96)
Massachusetts ____	New York ____	Alaska ____	Tennessee ____	(104)	(104)
California ____	Iowa ____	Oregon ____	Arizona ____	(112)	(112)
Alabama ____	Maryland ____	Minnesota ____	Montana ____	(120)	(120)
Utah ____	Florida ____	Ohio ____	Virginia ____	(128)	(128)

(NOTE: Horizontal vs. vertical format is intentional.)

Run on red

C

Name _____ Correct/Minute _____

Date ____/____/____ Incorrect/Minute _____

Vocabulary Usage: Synonyms/Item 14

Instructions: write a paragraph(s) using the synonyms listed.

Correction: count the number of synonyms used correctly and incorrectly.

Proficiency = 20-40/99%

Time = 2

walk, strolled; saw, observed; youth, boy; helpful, nice, angry, mad

(NOTE: Horizontal vs. vertical format is intentional.)

Run on blue

D

Name _____ Correct/Minute _____

Date ____/____/____ Incorrect/Minute _____

Vocabulary Usage: Antonyms/Item 8

Instructions: write a paragraph(s) using the antonyms listed.

Correction: count the number of antonyms used correctly and incorrectly.

Proficiency = 20-40/99%

Time = 2

hot, cold; dark, light; sweet, sour; new, old; star , stop

(NOTE: Horizontal vs. vertical format is intentional.)

Run on blue

E

Name _____ Correct/Minute _____

Date ____/____/____ Incorrect/Minute _____

Vocabulary Usage: Banking Words/Screening III

Instructions: write a paragraph(s) using the banking words used.

Correction: count the number of banking words used correctly and incorrectly.

Proficiency = 20-40/99%

Time = 3

deposit, withdrawal, balance, account, credit, overdraft, financial statement, debts, loans, check, savings, checking

(NOTE: Horizontal vs. vertical format is intentional.)

Run on white

Vocabulary Usage

Correct

(word used semantically correct)

(1) uses word whose meaning is correct within the context of the sentence and passage.

(2) uses new words [26] correctly

(3) is clear and concise in word use

Incorrect

(words used semantically incorrect)

(1) uses words whose meaning is incorrect within the context of the sentence or passage.

(2) uses new word incorrectly

(3) is wordy and pompous in word use

Refer back to the Overview section to review the "Steps in Conducting an Evaluation Sample".

Instructional Placement

The instructional placement guidelines for both grammar and vocabulary usage are listed below. These apply to practice/evaluation sheets and prose writing.

Practice/evaluation sheets and in prose writing	10-20 words written/ minute **AND/OR** 60-80% correct.

[26] A "new word" is a word the student has not used in previous prose writing.

Generic Teaching Tactics

A few points regarding word usage teaching are listed below.

1. Be sure words are part of speaking and reading vocabulary before requiring usage in writing.
2. Always practice by writing a complete paragraph or story.
3. Encourage identifying: "new words to use in writing".

The emphasis is on **usage**, not analysis, identification, or exams on definitions. There are a lot of people who **use** "gerunds" correctly but can't identify one or define the term.

As always, slice, demonstrate, require direct practice, and provide positive, corrective feedback.

* * *

When proficiency is achieved in the mechanics of word usage, the mastery of the eight basic writing areas is complete. A foundation is now established that enables the building of a "creative" creative writing program.

SUMMARY

Achieving proficiency in the eight basic writing areas indicates the achievement of functional writing literacy. Each pupil can **at least** write "simple coherent paragraphs" and thus accomplish the first 12 outcome goals.

Outcome goals 13-17 represent a second level of writing - a literary, creative, more formalized level. Functioning at this level is dependent on mastery of the basic writing skills, just as proficient word pronunciation is prerequisite to reading comprehension.

Thinking skills (e.g., say ideas, ask questions — about a picture) need to be practiced as soon as a child acquires basic language (i.e., three years old). When basic writing skills are mastered, they are combined with the well practiced thinking skills to "create" creative writing.

The major points which have been emphasized throughout the article are summarized below.

1. Each new skill or concept introduced in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, sentence structure, paragraph structure, grammatical usage, or vocabulary usage must first be introduced in reading material. Proficiency in reading the words, concepts, and structures must precede their introduction in writing.

2. Handwriting is the one basic writing skill which cannot be visually internalized through reading (although this can be solved by reproducing beginning reading materials in script). Handwriting is also the only basic writing skill with a component other than visual (i.e., kinesthetic).

   Handwriting is the most complex basic writing skill, yet is often terribly underemphasized. The most space was devoted to handwriting to emphasize its fundamental importance. Without mastery of this very first writing skill, we delegate scores of people to diminished writing enjoyment and others to writing illiteracy.

3. The systematic, sequenced, and massive direct practice (in reading and then writing) is designed to create internalization of the words, rules, and structures of written language in exactly the same way that young people throughout the world internalize spoken language — through demonstration, direct practice, and positive feedback, **but without formal instruction**.

4. The teaching focus is on the **usage** of intact skill or concept units (i.e., listed on the Curriculum Ladders) rather than on the rules, rationale, and the analysis of component parts. This is a synthesizing and developmental approach to teaching (build a new foundation) versus an analysis and remedial approach (find the cracks in a decaying foundation and patch them up).

5. Teach at the outcome goal (application) levels when possible (e.g., filling out application forms, writing a personal letter), versus one step removed (i.e., practice/evaluation sheets) or two steps removed (i.e., "correlated" skills). In line with this, start instruction where the student will end up (e.g., script writing, sentence spelling) rather than with a "correlated" skill (e.g., printing, word-list spelling).

6. Accuracy + **Fluency** = Proficiency, not just accuracy. Insuring fluency adds fluidness and ease to performance. Most important, without fluency, we do not achieve an automatic level and therefore get poor retention.

7. Seven basic concepts were introduced in the Overview section. They provided the format for discussing the eight writing areas. These concepts are intended to provide you with a conceptual framework for the process of teaching.

   If we know where we are going (**pinpointing the goals and objectives**), when we get there (**proficiency**), a place to start teaching (**instructional placement**), a means to measure change in performance (**evaluation procedures and materials and a measure of learning**) and a classroom management system (**classroom organization**), we can adapt the teaching procedures and materials (**generic teaching tactics**) to fit the individual needs of each student.

The teaching process described here is simplified and yet more effective. We are coming of age as a profession — Simplicity + Effectiveness = Sophistication.

Every student not physically limited, who has learned to speak and read has the ability to learn to be a fuctionally literate writer. I am convinced by following the concepts outlined here that 98 percent of our students can be proficient writers by the end of 4th grade.

After all is **said**, it is what is **done** that matters. In January 1981, I received a progress report dated Jan. 11, 1981 from Pat Hughes, one of the teachers mentioned in the acknowledgements. Pat has been following the concepts outlined here for the past three years in her 7th and 8th grade English classes at Keliher High School in Keliher, Minnesota. Below is an excerpt from Pat's report:

> "The 8th grade returned some very interesting data. This class has been working on the Basic Skills Program approximately one year plus 2½ months (only 2 days a week this year). Class average gains are 3 years 4 months in the areas of capitalization and usage, with 2 years and 4 months in punctuation. However, the most interesting part to me is that, although we were not working with reading skills during this time, this class RAISED IN READING AVERAGE 1.9

AND ITS VOCABULARY AVERAGE 1.7 from November to November. From May 1979 to Nov. 1980, the increase in READING and VOCABULARY was a full 2 years."

DATELINE: January 1992, Washington, D.C.
U.S. Department of Education :

"All secondary students sampled, in a recent Department of Education study, said they loved to write and only two % were not proficient in all basic writing skills."

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